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HARGRAVE;

OR,

THE ADVENTURES

OF

A MAN OF FASHION.

BY

MRS. TROLLOPE,

AUTHORESS OF "THE WIDOW BARNABY," ETC. ETC.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. III.

LONDON:

HENRY COLBURN, PUBLISHER,

GREAT MARLBOROUGH STREET.

1843.

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H A R G R A V E.

CHAPTER I.

NOTHING could be much farther from a satisfactory explanation than that which, after all his care and pains, Count Romanhoff had contrived to obtain concerning the cause of Mr. Hargrave's mysterious departure from Paris. Though by no means an ill-tempered man, he was vexed, out of sorts, and, worse than all, exceedingly angry with himself. He had, in fact, done no less than three things of which he was heartily ashamed,—he had, undeniably, listened to the cabals of a set of serving-men, while he was not known to be an

auditor ; he had condescended to pay a visit to a woman he detested, solely in the hope of picking up news ; and, lastly, he had made acquaintance with a consummate scoundrel, and driven through the streets of Paris with him in his carriage, for the same purpose. His pride, of which he had enough, underwent a very severe penance as he submitted himself to this close self-examination ; and he heartily wished that the conceited Englishman had been lodged at the bottom of the Red Sea before he had ever plagued himself about him.

Had this eager search after truth been successful — had he obtained intelligence of some well-established fact, which might have sufficed to cure his friend Alfred's love-fit for ever, he might have judged himself more leniently. But what had he learned by all this quidnunc gossiping ? Only that all the people in Paris, from the highest to the lowest, were busily engaged in talking about Mr. Hargrave, but evidently without knowing positively any single fact concerning him.

There was one statement, and one only,

which rested upon Count Romanhoff's mind with the full weight of truth. Madame de Hautrivate had positively asserted that Mr. Hargrave and his two daughters were gone to England. This was a matter of fact concerning which that much-detested lady could hardly be supposed to be misinformed or mistaken; and he therefore fully believed it.

As to the three conflicting histories which had reached him, he certainly could not be said completely to believe either; but of the three, the one which he had received on the vilest authority was that which appeared to him most likely to be true. Against it, indeed, was the fact of the two young ladies having departed with the hero of it; but it seemed not improbable that he might have taken them off under pretence of an ordinary excursion to his own country, in order to masque his real purpose for making it; and the hints of Madame de Hautrivate, concerning political motives, might have been left her by the gallant Lothario as a gossiping stalking-horse, with which she might amuse

herself and her acquaintance till he came back again. The words he had himself heard pass between Hargrave and his vile accomplice were, in short, so strong a confirmation of his story, as nearly to outweigh all that might have been urged against it; and almost sufficiently to convince him that he must have been mistaken when he fancied he saw Mademoiselle de Cordillac in a hackney-coach, when there was such very good reason to believe that she might have absented herself from the Ambassador's for the purpose of preparing for her expedition to England.

The only statement of the three, however, to which he paid absolutely no attention, was the true one. The circumstance of the police being in search of the gentleman never, for one instant, suggested the possibility that it might be true, for there was no difficulty whatever in believing that the outraged husband would take this means of redress, the moment he learned who it was that was suspected of having robbed him of his wife. A secret not at all likely to have been safer

yesterday in the keeping of Signor Julio Ruperto than it had been to-day.

The result of all this was a determination on the part of Count Romanhoff to write to his friend Coventry, to state to him, with one exception, all he had heard, to confess that he could not make up his mind to leave Paris till this singular mystery was explained ; and, finally, begging him very earnestly to return to his old quarters for a few weeks, to watch with him how the business would end. After which he should be ready to renew their delightful plan of travelling together ; and knew of nothing to prevent the whole of the coming summer from being thus agreeably employed. The *one* circumstance which he omitted to mention was Mademoiselle de Cordillac's reported journey to England,— a precaution which shewed that the young man felt by no means certain of having produced any very permanent effect on the state of his friend's heart by the spirited and graphic description he had given him of the unfeeling levity with

which the fair but false Adèle had listened to the mention of his name.

The letter thus decided upon was immediately written and sent off; after which, a desire of ascertaining how Prince Frederic of ***** received the rumours of the day, respecting a family for whom he had shewn so marked a degree of respect, induced Count Romanhoff to pay his Royal Highness a visit, at an hour of the evening when it was usual to find him at home. He was not disappointed in his expectation of finding him. The Prince was at home, and surrounded by a larger circle of gentlemen than usual. Count Romanhoff had not joined them above half a minute before he perceived that the same subject which had engrossed him during the whole day was that which was now being discussed with considerable animation before the Prince.

The arrival of Romanhoff was not likely to interrupt it, as his vivacious manner of entering into discussion on all subjects was

well known; and more than one voice was raised to welcome him.

“*Mon Prince! écoutons Romanhoff; soyez sur qu'il sait tout,*” said a young man who was standing near his Royal Highness, and who was advocating, half in jest and half in earnest, the *felonious* interpretation of the mystery, declaring that Mr. Hargrave’s notorious passion for show amounted to monomania, and might account very satisfactorily for the history of the stolen jewels, murder, and all.

“I shall be happy to hear Count Romanhoff’s account of this singular affair,” said the Prince, gravely; “and I shall be greatly surprised, M. le Chevalier, if he gives the same interpretation to it that you do. If every gentleman who entertains his friends with elegance and unbounded hospitality is to be considered as a madman and a thief, I fear that every individual will feel inclined to be his own entertainer for the future.”

Had the theory and belief of the Count accorded in all respects with that of the Che-

valier de Beaumont, he would hardly have had the *hardiesse* to state it after listening to so very pointed a reprimand. He rejoiced exceedingly, however, that his honesty was not to pay toll to his politeness, and answered promptly, “*Dieu m'en garde, monseigneur*; for if I believed it, I would turn hermit or Trappist without an hour's delay, for assuredly the world would not be fit to live in.”

“Indeed it would not,” said the Prince; “I quite agree with you, Count Romanhoff. And now, sir, you will do me a pleasure if you will let me hear to what conclusion you have been induced to come, by such sifting of truth from slander as it has been in your power to achieve. You are every where, Count, and must, of course, have heard the report, which at this moment we can do Mr. Hargrave no injury by repeating, concerning the more zealous than prudent part which our good friend has taken in politics. Do you apprehend that Mr. Hargrave has committed himself very deeply with the present government of France?”

"Will you permit me, *mon Prince*," replied Count Romanhoff, "to relate to you an adventure which happened to me this morning? I shall feel singularly obliged if your Royal Highness will permit me to do so, without uttering a single word of comment or opinion of my own, as it would be an honour I should greatly desire, might I hope to hear your Highness's opinion upon the truth or falsehood of what I have heard?"

"Go on, Count, I shall be extremely glad to listen to your narrative, even if you refuse me 'the advantage of your own judgment upon it.'

Count Romanhoff then related, with very scrupulous exactness, every thing that had passed between Mr. Julio Ruperto and himself in their drive from the Rue de Lille to the Italian Boulevard; and when he had finished, he bowed profoundly, but in silence, to the Prince, and seemed to expect that his Royal Highness should perform his part of the compact, to which he had seemed tacitly to have acceded.

Prince Frederic, who had listened to the narrative with deep attention, remained silent for a minute or two after it was finished,—a silence which was imitated by the whole party. At length the Prince said, “ I will certainly give you my opinion, Count Romanhoff, as you have asked for it; but you must remember that I shall speak of the tale, not as coming from you, but from the self-acknowledged villain from whom you received it. I consider it to be from beginning to end a most vile and atrocious falsehood, invented for the purpose of bringing forward the scoundrel who related it, in a manner which he thought might make himself advantageously known. Be very sure, Count Romanhoff, that there is no single word of truth in it. It is an invention altogether clumsy, contradictory, and improbable; and if there were nothing else in it to discredit its truth, is not the fact, that the young ladies, his daughters, are gone with him, amply sufficient to prove that not only this story is impossible, but every other in which there is the slightest tincture of dis-

honour? In believing Mr. Hargrave to have been indiscreetly zealous in his wish to revive a fallen dynasty, we may impeach his wisdom, but not his honour. This only can render his being accompanied by his daughters intelligible; and this only do I feel it possible to believe."

When princes condescend to form a decided opinion, and to utter it, those who have the advantage of listening rarely feel disposed to dispute it. A murmur, sufficiently distinct for its meaning to be caught, ran round the circle, by which it was made manifest that every gentleman there, whatever his opinion might have been before, *now* entirely agreed in the view of the case which Prince Frederic of ***** had taken.

Now there was one point in the chain of events which had come to the knowledge of Count Romanhoff, that had greatly contributed to his forming the judgment he had himself come to on the subject under discussion, but of which none but himself and one other had the advantage. This was de-

rived from the having involuntarily overheard the words which had passed between Mr. Hargrave and the infamous Ruperto. Had he been *tête-à-tête* with the Prince, it is possible that he might have been tempted to repeat them in defence of his own theory; but as it was, an invincible repugnance to declaring to all the party present, that he had obtained his information by listening to what was not intended for him to hear, restrained him, and he suffered the Prince's opinion to pass, by default of shewing any further arguments against it.

* * * * *

It may be that Prince Frederic of ***** was himself surprised to find how completely all the interest he had felt in the *fête* he was about to give had vanished. He had steadily kept his wise resolution of not meeting Sabina at the ball at the —— Embassy, but he had not even attempted to conceal from himself that the hours which he was to pass with her at his own entertainment, and which he was determined should be the last, would be

among the most interesting, though certainly the saddest of his life. But now that both the bitter and the sweet of this meeting was put out of his reach, he would have been exceedingly glad, could his ball have been given by deputy, and been accepted, nevertheless, by the *élite* of Paris as a suitable return for all the elegant hospitality he had received from them.

But as this could not be, he screwed his courage to the task before him, and performed it, too, in princely and right royal style; but not without feeling, from the beginning to the end of it, that he would far rather have laid his head upon his pillow, whence his thoughts might have wandered without interruption to England, whither the fair Sabina was gone—as Madame de Hautrivaige had confidentially given all Paris to understand.

But if this direction of the young man's thoughts shewed weakness, the conduct which was the result of that night's meditation gave proof of excellent strength, and of a sincerity of honourable purpose which deserved to be accompanied with happier feelings than at that

moment accompanied it. Sabina was gone to England, and therefore Prince Frederic determined that he would *not* go there. This resolution proceeded less from a wish to spare himself from further struggles between the inclinations of his heart and the duties of his station, than from the fear that any of those who had witnessed his admiration might suppose he had followed her. The thought that the slightest whisper from the lips of slander should be breathed against this innocent and lovely creature on his account was dreadful to him ; and he at once resolved, that, cost him what anguish it might, he would see that beautiful face no more.

But, although Prince Frederic's entertainment, brilliant as it was, was a wearisome and heavy business to the young host, it was far otherwise to the rest of the company ; for, besides the enjoyment of fine rooms, brilliant light, good music, sumptuous supper, magnificent dresses, and magnificent people, the company possessed the additional advantage of having a great deal to talk about.

The “*elopement*,” as it was called, of the unfortunate Madame Bertrand (now universally spoken of as an affair of gallantry), had, however, almost entirely given place to the more recent, and infinitely more interesting departure of Hargrave, “*le magnifique, et ses deux charmantes demoiselles*.” On this theme no tongue had, as yet, found it possible to weary ; and many years had passed over the head of Madame de Hautrivate since she had been an object of so much flattering attention as she was that night.

Endless were the romances in circulation. Some scrupled not to declare that they had excellent good reason for believing that one, at least, of the exiled royal family had been for weeks living concealed in Mr. Hargrave’s hôtel, and that the safety of these illustrious persons had been the only consideration which had rendered the secret departure of the Hargrave family necessary. Others seemed to know a great deal more than *that* about it; but although they permitted this fact to be guessed at, they resolutely abstained from

entering into any particulars. Others, again, were sorry to say that it was but too certain that Mr. Hargrave had lent enormous sums of money to the parties in question ; so much, indeed, as absolutely to have distressed himself, notwithstanding his prodigious wealth. Another party — of the quiet, sentimental loyalist class — professed to know that the motives which had actuated Mr. Hargrave in this business were of the most disinterested and noble kind, having their source and origin in national gratitude. No honourable Englishman, they said, could ever forget the court which had once been held at St. Germains ; and the noble-minded Hargrave had given “*l'assurance la plus sublime*,” that he remembered it !

All this, and a great deal more like it, was doubtless pronounced in accents more distinct, *da capo* more frequent, from the evident concurrence of the royal host in all such statements and in all such feelings ; and both from the example set by him, and the eager hope of obtaining further particulars to weave

into still longer romances, there was scarcely an individual in the room who did not in the course of the evening find an opportunity of offering a little flattering and affectionate homage to the interesting position of Madame de Hautrivate.

The finding herself thus suddenly grown into a heroine was sufficient to make her feel this remarkable evening to be a most delightful one, even though the week or ten days which had elapsed since the departure of the devoted legitimist had sufficed to enlighten her on one or two points concerning him, whereon she would have been better pleased to continue in darkness.

Her notion, that it would be equally agreeable, convenient, and unobjectionable in all ways for her to remain at her snug quarters in the Rue de Lille till her sublime *beau-frère* should find it convenient to return, had received some considerable checks since the time when it was first conceived. And, just before she retired to dress for Prince Frederic's party,

the care-worn visage of Mr. Jenkyns had presented itself at the drawing-room door, requesting permission to enter; which permission being given, the following conversation took place, Madame de Hautrivate replying to the melancholy steward's statement in the best English she could command.

"I beg your ladyship's pardon," said Mr. Jenkyns, who, though he saw a prodigious difference between a French countess and an English one, could never bring himself to believe that any of the species extant, let the clime in which they were found be what it might, could be properly addressed in any other manner,—"I beg your ladyship's pardon, but I am sadly afraid that your ladyship cannot have been made acquainted with the real state of the case, respecting the reason of my master's going away; and I have just made bold to step up-stairs to inquire if your ladyship knows that my honoured master is so deep in debt as to render his return home very improbable, not to say very unsafe."

“ Vat is dat mann vat you dar to say à propos de mon beau frère? mon broder-in-lowe?”

“ I say nothing, my lady, that it is not terribly easy to prove; only that I should be sorry to do any such a thing in the presence of your ladyship. It has been said in the servants' hall, that your ladyship has made up your ladyship's mind to remain where you are, till such time as my master shall return; and no sooner did I hear these words spoke, than I made up *my* mind upon what it was my duty to do. It would be great sin and wickedness in me, my lady, to let your ladyship stay on here till such time as there was neither board nor bed left for your ladyship's use.”

“ I am *horriblement mystifiée!*” cried Madame de Hautrivate, literally trembling from head to foot. “ It is one *diabolique* slander! Vat! de finest fortune *de tout Paris?* Ah! ça. I understand de English of de aristocrasie, *mais parfaitement, parfaitement*; but for you, my friend, no,—I comprehend not a single word of all you please to say.”

"Indeed, my lady, you must try to understand me," replied poor Jenkyns, who was really in distress. "I am sure if I knew how to speak any plainer, I would do it with all my heart and soul. But I don't know how; and as to trying my hand at French, I am quite positive it would not answer. Do pray, my lady, try to listen to me; because it is as clear as daylight, that if I cannot compass the making your ladyship understand, something very disagreeable will come of it. There will, indeed, my lady."

"*Eh, bien ! monsieur l'intendant.* I understand you quite veal enough. It is, then, that *mon beau-frère* is a ruined man? Dat is vat you wish me to know?" said Madame de Hautrivate.

"Yes, my lady," replied Jenkyns, with a very pitying expression of face; for, in spite of her rouge, it was easy to see that the poor woman had turned as pale as death; "and the best and safest thing that you can do will be just to put together all that belongs to you, my lady, and get it out of the house as fast

as you can ; for I have had a hint that to-morrow those who think they have the best right will be here without asking any body's leave, and take all they can lay their hands on without ceremony."

It was astonishing to remark how perfectly this last impressive speech of Mr. Jenkyns appeared to be understood by the lady. Fortunately, she was at no loss for an asylum ; for the strikingly pretty apartment *au troisième* in the Rue de Rivoli, which she had furnished and occupied for several years before her sister's death, was still in her hands, she having originally taken a long lease of it ; and from the pretty, fanciful style of its fitting up, it had never remained long without a tenant. It was now, however, fortunately unoccupied ; and the recollection of this and of the interesting effect which her present position would give to her return to it, consoled her with a degree of rapidity very delightfully French.

The old steward, himself exceedingly well off in the world, though by no means a dishonest man, seemed greatly relieved by the

active air of business which had succeeded to the lady's difficulty of comprehension, and being, like all the rest of his old servants, exceedingly attached to his improvident master, he zealously exerted himself to assist the only one of the family who seemed likely to suffer from the embarrassments into which he had fallen.

Not a syllable had as yet transpired among the household concerning the suspicion that their master was concerned in the disappearance of Madame Bertrand,—a concealment entirely due to the rigorous obedience of Louis Querin to the orders he had received from M. Collet, and from which he had hoped to derive substantial benefit. Mr. Jenkyns, therefore, was exceedingly well disposed to believe, with undoubting faith, the confidential hints with which Madame de Hautrivaige favoured him in return for his assistance in collecting together all that she thought it advisable to claim as her property; and before she had arranged with him all that she wished him to do for her, she had made him fully compre-

hend that, great as Mr. Hargrave's expenditure had been, his property would have been fully equal to it, had he not expended vast sums upon the different members of THE FAMILY to whom his heart was so legitimately devoted.

To this statement Jenkyns listened with the most perfect confidence in its truth ; for Mr. Hargrave's habits of lavish personal expense were such as often to have swallowed up sums upon which his steward had reckoned as the means of paying up arrears, which by degrees had overpowered him. Here, therefore, was another version of the course which had driven the generous Englishman from Paris ; and Madame de Hautrivate failed not, on arriving amidst the crowd at Prince Frederic's, to whisper these self-devoted imprudences to the five hundred dear friends she found among them.

How was it possible that, amidst such a number of dazzling fables, the dim, dark, little spot of truth should be discerned by the *beau monde* of Paris ? The easy and rapid propa-

gation of a lie is notorious; but many a meditative looker-on, who may be perfectly aware of this, may, nevertheless, overlook the fact that was side by side with it, namely, that in a thousand unsuspected instances, truth is as easily doomed to death as falsehood to life.

CHAPTER II.

A RUN of very great good luck, which Mr. Hargrave would have elegantly called “the influence of his protecting star,” had thus far so multiplied the effect which had hastily struck Mademoiselle de Cordillac as possible when she first conceived the idea of hinting that his *délit* was political, that had the fugitive presented himself in any fashionable saloon in Paris, he would have been welcomed as a most interesting personage and most noble gentleman. By some, indeed, he might have been hailed as a hero; while, on the other hand, there would certainly have been some, who, though ready to confess the generous nature of his devotion, might have thought he would have employed his noble

fortune better by listening to the universal prayer—

“ Oh ! may he give parties as long as he stays,”

than by attempting to shake the foundations of a popular and well-ordered government. But as to any suspicion against him, in the slightest degree bordering upon the truth, he must have dived almost to the very cellars of Paris before he would have found it.

Nor did the benignity of the “ starry influence” end here, but found its way, by degrees, even to a region where the sifting of facts is in general better understood than the influence of opinion,—even to the *bureau* of the *préfecture de la police*.

The first reception given to M. Louis Querin by M. Collet and his colleagues, upon his arriving with the news that Mr. Hargrave was not to be found, had a good deal of *morgue* and severity in it, and for a few moments the handsome *laquais* wished heartily that he had stuck to his former profession, and left the affairs of justice to take care of

themselves, without the benefit of his advice or assistance. But it seemed as if the professional gentleman thought more highly of Louis Querin in this line than he thought of himself (a circumstance rather new in the history of his life and adventures); and, when he was bowing himself off, gave him to understand that they by no means doubted his fidelity in the business, though displeased at his want of address, and that they by no means either intended to lose the advantage of his knowledge concerning the suspected party.

M. Collet, indeed, had at this time more reasons than one for wishing to secure Mr. Hargrave; for, though the matter had been kept very profoundly secret, that active and intelligent functionary had good reason to believe that he had at length got a clue to the discovery of the culprit in the mysterious affair of the robbed gamester when leaving the *salon* of Riccardo with his winnings.

Within twenty-four hours of the last of these robberies, an English gentleman had called at

the *préfecture de la police* where M. Collet presided, and desiring to speak to him alone, stated that he was the person from whom the gentleman attacked on his way home from the *salon* had the money taken from him; and that, having marked every coin of a considerable sum which he had brought in sovereigns with him to Paris, and of which he had never parted with any, except at the gaming-table, he thought it right, on hearing what had happened, to state the facts to the *chefs de bureau* in the hope of assisting to bring the criminal to punishment. The Englishman then produced a coin bearing the same private mark as those he had lost at play, and left it with the magistrate.

On this mark M. Collet looked long enough to become perfectly well acquainted with it; and when the money found upon the person of Roger Humphries was put into his hands, he immediately perceived that every coin was marked in the same manner.

A clearer chain of evidence could scarcely be desired; and there was, perhaps, some-

thing of sportsman-like eagerness in the zeal with which M. Collet prepared to follow the scent. The vexation, therefore, of finding the quarry escaped at the very moment when he had appeared so nearly secure, may be easily imagined.

But the disappointment, after the first moment of dismay, only gave fresh ardour to the pursuit; and, in truth, the very circumstance of Mr. Hargrave's having thus absconded furnished another proof of his guilt.

So few hours had elapsed since Querin had lost sight of his master, and so short must be the distance to which the fugitive could have reached, that the police of Paris were not likely to feel any great doubt respecting their chance of recovering the scent thus lost; and here M. Collet had again recourse to Louis Querin. Had it appeared necessary, pursuit would have immediately been made through every *barrière* leading from Paris; but this sort of wide-and-wild chasse was of course not resorted to as long as there was any chance of

shortening the pursuit by finding out the direction in which it could most successfully be made. Querin was, therefore, desired to take his place as usual in the establishment, over which, as we know, Madame de Hautri-vage for one delightful week fancied she might continue to preside, and to take all possible means to discover, either from his sister-in-law or the domestics, in which direction it had been his master's intention to travel.

The *habile* and intelligent M. Collet was in no way mistaken when he gave Louis Querin credit for being wholly and heartily interested in the business upon which they were engaged together. There were many motives and feelings which contributed to this; but none, perhaps, more powerful than the desire of redeeming his credit as a "very clever fellow" after the lamentable blunder which had afforded Hargrave time to escape.

He accordingly set about the new task confided to him with equal zeal and discretion, and had little or no difficulty in discovering,

through some of the minor channels of intelligence, which took their rise from the well-head of Madame's confidential communications to her favourite maid, that Mr. Hargrave, on leaving the —— embassy, had started with post horses for Calais.

Nor was this all the information which Louis Querin carried with him to the *bureau* of the Correctional Police. During the hours employed by Madame de Hautrivate in receiving the visits of her dear friends on the morning after the Ambassador's ball, Querin, fresh returned from his interview with M. Collet, and eagerly bent on losing no possible opportunity of collecting intelligence, stationed himself in the ante-room that he might note those who entered, and, perhaps, catch something from the words that should fall from them during their entrances and exits.

Just at the moment when the influx was the greatest, Querin observed a highly dressed personage mount the stairs whom his experienced eye (and few eyes are keener in such matters than those of a long-practised *laquais*)

immediately discovered belonged not, by the prescriptive right of custom, to any such circle as that he was now about to enter. No sooner did he perceive this, than the man of course became an object of particular attention to him ; and, ere he had fixed his eyes upon his hirsute and strongly marked countenance for half-a-dozen seconds, he recollect ed that his name was Ruperto, and that he had more than once shewn him into Mr. Hargrave's library as a confidential agent of some sort or other, a conclusion which he had come to from hearing the door fastened within as soon as he was admitted.

Never, however, had this fellow before attempted to obtrude himself into the presence of the ladies of the family ; and Querin, therefore, stepped forward, partly from curiosity, and partly from a sort of official habit, of deeming it necessary to know who it was he admitted, and said, "There is some mistake, sir, I think : Mr. Hargrave is not in the drawing-room."

" And pray, my friend, can you tell me

where he is?" returned Ruperto, putting a five-franc piece into the hands of Querin.

" May I ask, sir, what your particular reason is for wishing to know?" demanded Louis, pocketing the gratuity.

" Yes, faith, may you, *mon cher*," returned the other, " and I will tell you, too, with all my heart and soul. I have no taste for secrets, except in the way of duty and business, where honourable confidence is given and expected on both sides,—and, by the Holy Madonna, that is not the case here. I will tell you why I want to find your *scelerato* of a master, if you will tell me in return all that you know about him, and give you a cup of wine into the bargain. But you must let me in here, though, without making any fuss about it; and you must not trouble yourself about giving in the name."

" *That* you have paid for," said Querin, tapping the pocket wherein he had deposited the five francs, " and I will stand to my share of the bargain; and for the rest, I will meet you at nine o'clock to-night at the *Café Napoléon*.

léon, au coin de la Rue St. Jacques." To this appointment Signor Julio Ruperto nodded assent; the drawing-room door was then thrown open, and he entered. Here he had the good fortune to find Madame de Hautrivage so agitated and excited by all the affectionate interest expressed for her, that she never perceived his entrance.

The positive assurance which he there obtained of Mr. Hargrave's departure for England made his promised interview with Querin a matter of much less importance than it had been; but he kept the appointment nevertheless, not doubting that he might learn some particulars respecting his faithless debtor which might in a greater or less degree be useful to him.

The consequences of this meeting were manifold. MM. Querin and Ruperto became mutually convinced before the conclusion of it, that they were very fine fellows, and might become essentially useful to each other. Querin, in return for his companion's passionate repetition of his injuries, and deep

vows of revenge against “*l’infame Hargrave*,” hinted to him that the police would be the safest agents he could employ to ensure the desirable end; and they parted with an agreement to meet again on the following evening.

“ All this shall to *M. Collet’s* ears,”

or words to the same effect, were murmured by the intelligent Louis, as he returned to the quarters he still inhabited in the Rue de Lille; and at rather an early hour on the following morning he stood before this very respectable *chef*, and informed him of the very lucky accident which had thrown in his way a fellow who had not only been an active agent in the abduction of Madame Bertrand, but so deep in the confidence of Mr. Hargrave as to give good hopes of being an important witness against him.

This valuable communication sufficed to seal the peace of Louis Querin, and he again felt himself to be an approved and trusted agent of that august power, which in all

countries (sufficiently advanced in the social process, up or down, to require and use its aid) is found, like the purveyor of wild ducks, to seek its agents and objects from the same class. In a word, Louis Querin had every reason to be satisfied with the reception of his news, and no time was lost in requesting the presence of Signor Julio Ruperto in the private cabinet of the Correctional Police.

All suspicion of Mr. Hargrave's being concerned in the disappearance of Madame Bertrand had till now rested entirely upon circumstantial evidence ; but in the statement of this man, delivered on oath, and with an accurate exactness which left no doubt of its truth on the professionally acute mind of his skilful examiner, there appeared the most positive and direct testimony against him up to a certain period, *but no farther.*

Ruperto, who appeared to have known him for several years, persisted in declaring that he was perfectly certain the object of the abduction was the lady's person ; and that, if in truth she had been robbed, it must have

been during her solitary drive to the place whither Mr. Hargrave had ordered her to be conveyed. That gay gentleman's purpose having been, as he avowed to his accomplice, to remove all suspicion, by returning to the ball-room the instant after he had placed Madame Bertrand in the carriage.

During that part of Ruperto's statement which described the interview between himself and Hargrave previous to the abduction, as well as the precise manner in which he, Ruperto, had made his way into the garden, and received, exactly at the appointed spot, the full-dressed lady from the hand of his employer, the *chef* listened without betraying any symptom of doubt or distrust; but, upon his repeating his conviction that robbed or not Madame Bertrand had been conveyed to the lodging provided for her, M. Collet shook his head, and said that he feared he would find upon inquiry that he was mistaken.

"Mistaken! your Excellency?" exclaimed the Italian. "How is it possible I could be mistaken? Depend upon it, if the postilion

lads had been bilked of their fare, I should have heard of it by this time. They know well enough where to find me. It is not the first time that they were ever hired by me."

"To what place was it that you told these boys to drive?" demanded M. Collet.

"Your Excellency has asked me a question which I am not able to answer," replied Ruperto, looking exceeding ashamed of himself. "Signor Hargrave gave me the address very distinctly written on a card, telling me to give it to one of the post boys, to prevent all mistakes, as he should not dare raise his voice to give them orders. And though I know that I looked at the card before I gave it to the lad, and remember something about the distance, which the boy said, as I think, was about three leagues, I have no more idea where it was than your Excellency's horse."

"That was rather a singular want of curiosity, was it not, Signor Ruperto?" said M. Collet.

"Singular, your Excellency! oh, no, not

the least singular,—not the least in the world. No men can be less troubled with curiosity in such matters than I am. I consider myself as having been very particularly ill-used by the Signor Hargrave; and, therefore, have no reason or motive whatever for wishing to conceal any thing I know about him. But as to the identical spot to which he carried the lady, and from whence, as I learned from the old dowager his sister, he has set off for England (probably taking his fair friend along with him), I know it not."

"Are you aware, Signor Ruperto," said M. Collet, "that the suspicions against M. Hargrave go a great deal farther than merely running off with a fair lady?"

"Yes, your Excellency; M. Louis Querin has told me so. But I do not believe a word of it."

"Indeed! and why so?"

"Because I know the man, your Excellency. I know him well. If ever there was a worshipper of pleasure, it is this English-

man. But as to murder, or robbery either, I must have better authority than any that has come up yet, before I shall believe it."

"Then how would you account for what, as I dare say you may have heard from your friend Querin,—how would you account for what has been found in the garden?"

"My friend Querin, as your Excellency is pleased to call him, only told me that a robbery, and probably a murder, had been committed on the person of the unfortunate lady with whom the Signor Hargrave eloped. But he gave me no particulars; saying that he had bound himself not to do so. No, your Excellency, I have heard of nothing having been found in the garden."

"Querin was right, and has behaved well in not telling you. But you have had so much to do with this transaction, that I would wish you to know the whole of it. It is by no means improbable that you may be able to assist us."

M. Collet then detailed the discovery that had been made in the garden of the golden

débris of Madame Bertrand's magnificent jewels; not forgeting the handkerchief (recognised by Louis as belonging to his master) which was found stained with blood. Having concluded this narrative, during the course of which M. Collet kept his eyes fixed on the countenance of Ruperto, he said, "And now, Signor Ruperto, tell me what you think of this?"

"I can but repeat what I have said before, your Excellency," replied the man, with the utmost *sang froid*. "I feel still perfectly convinced that the motive the Signor assigned when planning this adventure with me, was the real one. I have no faith whatever in his having committed robbery and murder. My intercourse with mankind has taught me to know them better than that."

"Are you aware, my good friend, that if M. Hargrave did not commit the outrage, there appears every possible reason to suppose that you must have committed it yourself?"

"*Diavolo!*!" exclaimed the Signor, laughing; "I cannot say that this ever occurred

to me. But, now you mention it, your Excellency, I must confess that it looks very probable. However, the suggestion can only be productive of a short inconvenience to me; as just half-a-dozen gentlemen of high distinction, who did me the honour of using my *petit billard* during all the later part of that night, will be able to prove to your Excellency's entire satisfaction that I was engaged in marking for them very nearly the whole time."

"Very nearly!" repeated M. Collet, with a rather sinister emphasis.

"*Oi, Diavolo!*" again exclaimed the Italian. "That is true, your Excellency,—perfectly true. And if I had no better defence to offer it might go hard with me; inasmuch as it would be easy to prove that murder and robbery both might be committed within the space of time which this 'very nearly' may cover. Nevertheless, your Excellency, I cannot pretend to say that I am greatly alarmed. Very few innocent men, I suspect, get sent to the galleys, or to the guillotine either. I have

generally remarked in all countries, let the government be what they will, that robbery and murder is greatly objected to, and sharply looked after; and that being the case, it cannot often happen that the wrong man is taken instead of the right one."

"Your observation is *supérieurement juste*, my friend," replied M. Collet. "I have, myself, the greatest faith in it. But you must be aware that this admirable result can only be obtained by strict attention not to let the guilty escape; for without this, it would be nearly impossible to avoid occasionally condemning the innocent. In the present instance, for example, how is it possible to avoid the danger of believing either M. Hargrave or yourself to be guilty of the terrible outrage, which it is but too certain has been committed, if no other person can be found on whom suspicion can rest?"

"I beg your Excellency's pardon ten thousand times," said the Italian; "but it strikes me that the same argument might constrain gentlemen of your honourable and most im-

portant profession, occasionally to seize upon the first comer,—*faute de mieux.*”

“Pushed to extremity, it might,” replied M. de Collet, half smiling at the man’s audacity. “But on the present occasion you will hardly think we are driven so far, even if we take the liberty of detaining Signor Ruperto till we see more satisfactory reasons for dismissing him than any he has yet stated.”

“*Eh, bien, donc, M. le Chef,*” returned Ruperto, with the same imperturbable composure, “if your deficiency of information lays you under the necessity of asking assistance from so very useless an individual as myself, I will suggest that, in the first place, you should despatch trustworthy and properly qualified persons to England, *via* Calais, by which means there is but little doubt of your being able to trace this fugitive gentleman,—a business in which I am certainly not a little interested myself. Secondly, I should recommend your taking the two postilions into custody; and, thirdly, I would advise you

to satisfy yourself as to the recent occupation of that resolute elderly personage, who, as I understand from M. Louis Querin, was found under circumstances very highly suspicious, near the supposed *locale* of the crime."

"Had you been attached to my *bureau* for a score of years, Signor, you could hardly have displayed more correct views of the subject before us. I really honour you," returned M. Collet. "For the first of your suggestions, permit me to assure you that it has not been overlooked. I have little fear of failing to discover by what exit your friend, M. Hargrave, left Paris. For the second, I thank you; and shall request your assistance in pointing out the individuals you have named, when it shall immediately be put in execution. For the third, I declare to you that I have already done every thing in my power to put it in practice, but in vain. I think I never had so impracticable a personage in my hands as the stately old fellow you mention; but as you appear to be a person of very brilliant capacity, I shall have

no objection whatever to your assisting at another examination of this obstinate old man."

" May I hope to have your Excellency's leave to question him?" demanded Ruperto, with a leer.

" Unquestionably ; my general habit is certainly to permit nothing of the kind, but the conduct of this man obliges me to vary my mode of proceeding," replied M. Collet. " I shall, also," he continued, " wish to have Louis Querin present at this examination, for it is evident to me that he knows more against the man's general character than he has yet thought proper to state."

Before this interview ended, it was settled that the renewed examination of old Roger should take place before Signor Ruperto left the *bureau* ; and a message was accordingly despatched to the Rue de Lille to summon Querin.

As soon as he made his appearance, M. Collet informed him that the present object of his being sent for was that he might be

present at a renewed examination of Roger Humphries, adding, "I shall to-day, Querin, make no objection to your asking him any questions which may suggest themselves to you. You evidently know more of the man than you have yet avowed; and it now becomes your duty to make use of that knowledge in order to assist the purposes of justice, and elicit the truth which he is so obstinately determined to conceal."

Querin's heart leaped with joy. His hatred to old Roger was by no means appeased by the fact, which appeared clearly evident from his obstinate silence, that this favoured domestic was in the secret counsels of his master.

"A pretty fellow, truly," thought this French Leporello,—"a pretty fellow to select from a household, of which I made one, for an agent in an elopement. It shall go hard with me but I will make both master and man repent of their clumsy alliance!"

When Roger appeared before the party

assembled in M. Collet's cabinet, consisting of himself, one of his *confrères*, a clerk to take down whatever facts or observations might be obtained, and M. Ruperto and Querin, he looked as nearly like a man made of iron, as it was possible for a living thing to do. The impassible rigidity of his countenance seemed to preclude the expression of any feeling whatever; and each and all of the sharp-witted party present felt that nothing in the way of information could be hoped from him. Nevertheless, the attempt was made, and M. Collet once more attacked him upon the point of his having turned so suddenly away upon discovering that he was watched.

“Do you still,” said he, “refuse to answer me when I ask you where you had been on the morning after the ball given at your master's house? Do you still refuse to explain the reason for your stealing away and hiding yourself in the manner you did.”

“You must have the goodness, gentlemen,

to excuse my being an Englishman," returned Roger, in his perfectly intelligible, but somewhat comical French.

"I do not comprehend you, old man. What do you mean by our excusing you for being an Englishman?" said M. Collet.

"I mean, sir," replied Roger, "that being an Englishman makes me so used to go and come without giving account to any one, that I cannot fall into the way of answering such sort of curious questions as you put to me, especially without knowing why they are asked. It seemed to me that I met a party of mad folks at the time you mention; and one would think, gentlemen, that you must be as mad as they to lock up a peaceable man in the manner you have locked up me at their bidding!"

"I do not believe that you are quite so silly a fellow as you would have me think you," returned the *chef*; "whether English or French, I suspect you know better than really to think it extraordinary or unjust, that, when a great and mysterious crime has been

committed, the officers of justice should make prisoner of a person found nearly on the spot, and under the very suspicious circumstances which you so obstinately refuse to explain."

"Will you be so kind, gentlemen, as to tell me what this mysterious crime was?" said Roger, demurely.

"*Ce coquin joue bien la comédie,*" said Querin, giving a look of very malicious intelligence to M. Collet.

"Will you have the kindness, M. Roger Omfries," he added, turning with an air of mock humility to the prisoner,—"will you have the kindness to inform these gentlemen when it was that you changed your pumps and silk stockings for these gaiters and thick shoes? Come now, M. Roger; that is a question which it cannot hurt the dignity of an Englishman to answer."

"I changed them, M. Louis," replied Roger, "when I went out of the drawing-room into the open air."

"And that was as soon as supper was over,

M. Roger, if I mistake not," rejoined the Frenchman; "so that you must have had rather a long job to do, before we had the honour of meeting you, and putting your English mettle to the proof by making you scamper away from us."

"After supper was it?" said Roger, quietly.

"Pray, may I be so bold as to ask, M. Roger Omfries, where it was you got all that rather remarkable quantity of gold coin which I had the accident of seeing you counting one day, when I caught you sitting down before your *coffre-fort* in your bed-room?"

"I do not know, M. Louis, what right you had to spy me then, nor what right you have to question me now; but, as it happens, I have not the least objection whatever to answer you. I got that gold, as well as every thing else that I possess on earth, from my noble and generous master, Mr. Hargrave."

The officers of the police exchanged a glance as he said this; and the superior said, addressing Roger, "Should you have any

objection to our having that *coffre-fort* brought hither in order to be examined?"

"Objection!" reiterated the old man, while a momentary flash of indignation crossed his features; "I should have a very great objection to it."

"*Je le crois bien,*" muttered Querin, with a sneer.

"I am sorry for it," returned M. Collet, quietly, "because it appears to me absolutely necessary that we should examine it. Do you know, Louis Querin, where to find it?"

"In the sleeping apartment of the old gentleman, I conceive," returned the malicious Louis, endeavouring to suppress the glee that was chuckling in his throat; "for it was there I caught sight of him, counting his treasure when he fancied that he was all alone."

"Go, then, to that place and seek for it, and bring it here," said M. Collet.

"By your leave, I must have help then, *M. le Chef,*" returned Querin, laughing;

"the *coffre-fort* of M. Roger Omfries is no such light matter."

"Have you ever tried its weight, M. Louis?" said Roger, in an accent of great civility.

"*Scélérat!*" muttered Querin through his closed teeth, and with a glance that spoke a great deal, but not of love.

"See for a man to go with the witness in search of this *coffre-fort*," said M. Collet, addressing the officer who sat near him; "and send in a *gendarme* to watch the prisoner till he returns. I am wanted elsewhere."

"May it please your Excellency that I should ask this old fellow a question or two, in the absence of his fellow-servant?" demanded Ruperto, in a whisper.

M. Collet nodded, and reseated himself.

"That is a queer chap, that Louis Querin," said the Italian, as soon as the door was closed upon the individual he named. "I dare say, good friend, you could tell us whether he was greatly in the confidence of his master before the gentleman set off? Do you think now, that if Mr. Hargrave had any little secret mis-

chief to carry on, that gay fellow would have been applied to, in order to help him in it?"

"My master!" said Roger, fixing his eyes eagerly upon Ruperto, while the rigid obstinacy of his features seemed suddenly to relax: "has my master any thing to do with all the questions you have been asking me?" Then, without waiting for a reply, he added, respectfully addressing the *chef*, "It is no good, sir, wasting your time any longer in this matter; I am tired of it, and had rather stand the punishment, and have it over at once. I don't see any reason in the common course of things why a man should give evidence against himself; and that is the reason, as of course you guessed before, why I would give no answer. Nor do I mean now to tell you one bit more about the matter than your own cleverness can find out; and I must bear the penalty and punishment of all the harm that you can prove against me. But it is one thing to keep silence about one's self, and another to go on with it, till suspicion falls upon an honourable gentleman like my mas-

ter; so I am willing to confess, once for all, that all that has been done wrong has been done by me; and that my master knows no more about it than the child unborn. Now, do your worst with me; I can bear it."

"But in order to make this confession of use in exonerating your master," said M. Collat, fixing a scrutinising eye upon the harsh features of the old man, "it will be necessary for you to do more than merely confess that you are guilty. You must render all particulars of this singular transaction, especially as to the place you came from when you were seen by the gentlemen who brought you hither."

"And that is what I will not do," said Roger, resuming his former look of obstinacy. "I may be a very wicked man, and yet not bad enough, either to see an innocent gentleman like my master brought into trouble on my account, nor yet to 'peach against my confederates. Of course, you suspect I have got confederates by what that dark-coloured gentleman said just now about a fellow being

wanted to help. And I sha'n't say a single word about them, so don't trouble yourselves with asking me."

"But of what do you confess yourself guilty? It is nonsense to affect all this generosity, and then stop short, and leave us still in the dark. That, of course, is the way to make us suspect the innocent. Of what do you confess yourself guilty?" repeated M. Collet.

"And so put all particulars into your hands?" said Roger, shaking his head. "No, no, I will not do that. Besides, I may blunder in my speech, being a foreigner, if I go on telling too much. Justice to my master has forced me to confess that I am guilty, and not he, in this matter that seems to lie between us two: but I shall not tell you a single word more about it. It is your business, and not mine, to sift out all the particulars. When you bring me to my trial, I have no fear but what justice will be done; and that what I deserve I shall get, and no more."

" May I speak to your Excellency in private for a moment?" demanded the Italian, addressing M. Collet.

Willing, as it seemed, to listen to any thing that might enlighten a business which appeared more mysterious than ever, the chief of the *bureau* ordered the venerable prisoner to be removed, but kept within call, till Querin should return: and when left alone with Ruperto and the secretary, desired the former to proceed with what he wished to say.

" May it please your Excellency," resumed the Italian, " I have my own reasons for believing that what the old fellow says is true. Of course your Excellency knows your honourable duty better than to take any thing for granted because I say it; and so all inquiry will go on, as it ought to do, till your Excellency is perfectly satisfied. Only, as it would be both honour and pleasure for me to help your Excellency to learn the truth, concerning a business in which I certainly had some hand, I cannot but wish to tell you that I have known the Signor Hargrave very

nearly twenty years; that he is a man of pleasure, neither more nor less, neither better nor worse; that if you pursue him for robbery and murder, you will be sure to get wrong; and that if murder or robbery, one or both, have been committed, it is not by him; so that you had better keep both eyes open, your Excellency, in order to discover the real criminal. My own firm belief is, that the Signor Hargrave has set off with his new flame for England; and that it is likely enough that the jewels of the lady, who certainly could not travel covered over with diamonds, as she was when I gave her into his arms, were deposited somewhere or other where this very suspicious old fellow got access to them, stripped off the settings, and buried them; and was probably returning from the place where he left the more valuable portion of his plunder, when Querin and the two gentlemen got hold of him; and if I prove to be right, your Excellency, I hope you will deem my services worthy of some reward; for not only shall I have helped you

to find the right man, but saved you from the disagreeable accident of seizing upon a wrong one."

" If events prove you to have been right, Signor Ruperto, you shall not find me ungrateful ; but if Madame Bertrand, as you imagine, is at this time on her way to England, how do you account for this blood ? " And as he spoke, M. Collet opened a drawer with a key which hung from his watch-chain, and shewed him the stained handkerchief.

Ruperto took it in his hand, and extended it between himself and the light for a moment ; then rolled it up again, and laughed slightly as he restored it to the commissioner of police. Collet looked at him earnestly, but neither of them spoke. At length the officer ejaculated, " Well ! "

" Well ! " returned the Italian, with a profound bow. " If it were not that I feared to appear presumptuous, by venturing to give your Excellency a hint on such a subject as this, I should recommend that you should not accuse any man of murder upon the evidence

of that handkerchief. The lifeblood of a chicken would make a better show."

"I suspect that you may be right in that matter, Signor; for, on examination, I have found the settings, which have evidently been torn off with much violence, are in many parts stained likewise; and I confess I have before suspected that these stains proceeded rather from the robber than the robbed. So far, Signor," continued the *chef* with a smile, "you perceive that our ideas are the same. It remains to be proved which of us is right on the points whereon we differ. I do not agree with you in your acquittal of M. Hargrave from the suspicion of having turned his gallant freak into a source of profit. You will perceive my reasons for this pertinacity in maintaining my own opinion, ere long."

Louis Querin was no loiterer when employed in business which gave him pleasure; and, as it seemed, he found no difficulty in discovering where old Roger's huge box might be found, for he arrived in a *fiacre*, containing

what he was pleased to call the *coffre-fort*, considerably before he was expected.

The clumsy wooden box, painted of a deep blue colour, and with as little appearance of strength about it as any thing with a lock could have, was then brought into an apartment kept for private examinations, and old Roger Humphries was again led in before the same party as before.

At sight of this receptacle of the memorials, personal whims, and solid treasures, of forty years of service (for so long had the good man served Hargrave and Hargrave's father), Roger knit his brows, and looked infinitely more ill at ease than he had yet done.

Roger Humphries was a bachelor, and had all the morose-like sensibility concerning his own little personalities which may generally be remarked in individuals of both sexes, when they have lived to a certain age without having been tempted to give to any one the privilege of setting to rights their peculiar belongings. The grave but passionless composure of countenance in which his hard features had hitherto

reposed (save at the moment that his master's name was first mentioned), was now changed for a very nervous and uneasy twitching ; and it was hardly possible for any man to look much less at his ease than did Roger when Louis Querin, at a sign from M. Collet, knelt down beside the box; and extending his hand towards him, pronounced authoritatively,—

“ *La clef!*”

To have given up the key of all his petted and secret treasures to any man, would have been exceeding painful to poor Roger; but to the gibing and insolent Querin, who had never, since the hapless hour in which they first met, omitted an opportunity of treating him with ridicule and insult, it was dreadful, and every working feature shewed that it was so.

The eyes of M. Collet and Ruperto met. There was at this moment something like a trial of skill between them ; and each desired to see the effect which this remarkable alteration in the demeanour of the prisoner produced. The Italian smiled, and perhaps the French-

man returned it; but if he did, the dignity of office prevented his permitting it to be visible, for his hand gravely enveloped the lower part of his face.

Meanwhile, Roger Humphries did not deliver the key. After hesitating for a minute or two, he folded his arms tightly across his breast, planted himself firmly where he stood, and shut up his eyes, as if to avoid seeing any of M. Louis Querin's signs and grimaces.

"*Donnez la clef, mon ami!*" said M. Collet, in a tone of quiet authority.

Considering the diminutive nature of the reasons for his averseness to comply with this command, the look of misery which accompanied his obedience to it certainly appeared exceedingly suspicious; and those who were so keenly watching him could hardly fail of being deluded in their interpretation of it. But though—

"A very foolish, fond old man,"

in regard to some of the secret memorials to be found in his box, Roger was not so over-

powered by his feelings as to be insensible to the necessity of complying with this strictly official command ; and after a short delay in finding it, he stepped forward, and deposited the old-fashioned little key in the hands of M. Collet.

Could Roger have been aware how perfectly unintelligible to the lookers-on were the treasured articles which constituted the chief contents of this sacred repository, his sufferings would have been entirely removed ; for concerning that weighty portion of them contained in a leather-bag, with a red-tape string twisted round it, which, like its master, had performed the same duties faithfully for the better part of half-a-century, concerning this, he thought no more than if it had contained three hundred bits of pasteboard instead of three hundred golden sovereigns.

The little pocket-book, on which Master Charles Hargrave had spent half-a-crown out of his seventh birthday *largesse* from his papa, as a present for his “dearly-beloved Roger ;” the old black-coat and crape hatband in which

he had attended the funeral of Mr. Hargrave's father; six carefully preserved silk pocket-handkerchiefs, hemmed by the delicate fingers of his late mistress, and presented to him as a mark of particular esteem; numberless little presents in books, writing-desks, queer snuff-boxes, and Heaven-knows-what, received from Adèle and Sabina, beginning from the time when they were almost babies, and continuing in regular, and not unfrequent succession, till within a few weeks of this terrible and most unlooked-for day; and, strongest of all, a lock of youthful-looking, feminine, long hair, folded up in a morsel of paper, which tempted examination from the careful manner of its envelopement, and on which was written "*Sally!*" with a hand trembling, perhaps, with emotion as tender as that which dictated the beautiful "*Eheu, Evelina!*" traced by the pen of "*the Antiquary.*" All these dearly-loved pledges of favour and affection were freshly remembered by the tortured old man, and he would willingly have given all his sovereigns to redeem them from the profanation of the ribald eyes

before which they were now to be displayed. They were passed over, however, without observation or notice of any sort, except an occasional sneer and wink from the facetious Louis. But not so the bag of gold. No sooner did this meet the eyes of M. Collet, than he stretched out his hand to receive it, and having thrown out the contents upon a table before him, drew from his pocket a magnifying glass, with which he began carefully to examine each separate coin.

This was an operation which evidently puzzled every individual present as much as it did Roger. M. Collet, however, did not seem to be at all communicative on this point, freely as he had conversed with Ruperto and Querin respecting all the other circumstances connected with the prisoner. But having finished the operation, counted the money, and withdrawn five gold pieces from the scattered contents of the bag, he collected the remainder, replaced it in its leatherne receptacle, restored the old string to its duty, exactly in the manner in which he had found it ; and then, having seen

the bag lodged in the blue box, turned the lock of it himself, and deposited the key, together with the abstracted coins, in the drawer, to which the only means of access hung from his own watch-chain.

During all this time he spoke not a single word to any one; but as he returned the chain to its place, he once more addressed the prisoner, and said, “Have you any objection, my friend, to inform me from whence you obtained that large sum in gold?”

Roger paused to consider for a moment whether any species of harm to his master could arise from his declaring the truth, and not conceiving the possibility of this, he replied, “I had it from my master.”

“ You received three hundred louis d’or—sovereigns, I should say,—from Mr. Hargrave?” demanded M. Collet, once more fixing his suspicious eyes full upon the face of the prisoner.

“ Yes, sir, I did,” replied Roger, with recovered composure; the safe custody of his

little key in M. Collet's keeping being a real comfort to him.

"Have you any objection to telling me for what reason your master intrusted you with so large a sum?" demanded the commissioner.

"Intrusted, sir!" repeated Roger, really puzzled by the phrase, and, for that reason, at a loss how to answer it.

"You will do better, my friend, by answering my questions directly than by repeating them. You cannot seriously hope to obtain any advantage by delay thus obtained?"

"I do not understand what you mean, sir," replied Roger, without any rudeness of manner; for now that they had ceased to question him concerning the errand upon which he had been engaged when taken into custody, he felt little or no reluctance to replying to any questions that could possibly be asked, in which he alone was concerned; but the words that had been spoken concerning his master, and which led him to fear that he must have got into some gay scrape or other, rendered him cau-

tious, when the inquiries made were such as to leave him in doubt concerning their object.

"Then first, or last, we must teach you," replied M. Collet, testifying more impatience at this evasive reply than he had yet shewn. "I have other business to attend to, and can waste no more time on you. This affair must go before the proper tribunals. Remove him!" he added, calling in two of the *gendarmerie* in waiting without. "He shall be removed into closer confinement to-morrow. Meanwhile, take care of him. The case is of considerable importance."

Poor Roger, about equally shocked and puzzled by such of these words as reached him, was then led away; and M. Collet turned to the witnesses, if such they might be called, telling them that they would receive notice when and where they were to appear to give evidence upon more than one point on which they would probably have to be examined. But before Querin left the *bureau*, the commissioner asked him if he too had

been accustomed to receive his wages from Mr. Hargrave in gold.

"No, sir, always in five-franc pieces," was the reply.

"Do you think it probable that Mr. Hargrave ever gave that old man the sum you have just seen displayed before you? Do you think it likely that he should ever have received seven thousand five hundred francs from his master?"

"No, sir, never!" replied Querin, with great earnestness. "I am quite certain it is impossible. And you had a thief in your hands this day, if ever you saw one in your life."

"*Allons, mon ami,*" said Signor Ruperto, bowing profoundly to the *chef*. "There is not the least chance that his Excellency should blunder upon a fact so very clearly established. An eye less acute than that of Monsieur would have been able to detect the rogue in less than half the time that this old fellow has stood before him."

Left to himself, M. Collet, notwithstanding

the pressure of business, gave a few minutes of meditation to all the circumstances of the two singular cases of robbery which had come before him. A few hours before, he had felt convinced that he had discovered the perpetrator of both in the same person ; and now he was of the same opinion still, but with this difference, that the individual was changed.

That an old serving-man should have seven thousand five hundred francs in gold lodged snugly in the corner of his box, and yet be an honest man, seemed to him so improbable, that he should have felt ashamed to confess he had ever wasted a thought on its being possible. No ! That Roger Humphries was a thief was established in his mind as a fact beyond the reach of doubt ; and this being the case, the probability of his master's innocence strengthened in his mind with every moment's consideration of the subject.

The unimpeachable testimony he had received that the man he had in custody had most strenuously endeavoured to evade pursuit ; his steadfast refusal to confess where he had

passed the interval between the hour of supper at Mr. Hargrave's entertainment, and that at which he had been seen skulking back to his home; the accordance of this with the period of Madame Bertrand's disappearance—various persons having deposed that she had been seen only for a few moments in a waltz after that time; the man's positive, though undefined, confession of guilt; and, finally, the discovery of this extraordinary sum of gold in his possession, of which he had given an account which appeared to the Frenchman so grossly false, as very greatly to increase the suspicion against him: all this together formed a chain of evidence perfectly irresistible; while the circumstance of many pieces of money having been found in his possession, both on his person and in his box, known to have been stolen from the gentleman who had been robbed on his return from Riccardo's, connected him with that atrocious crime also, in a manner the most clear and decisive.

Many other circumstances, also, seemed to suggest arguments in favour of Mr. Hargrave's

innocence. His immense wealth, *believed*, or, as enough people were ready to swear, *known*, by all the world; his character as a man of gallantry and pleasure; his intimate connexion with all the most distinguished personages in Paris; all this, in M. Collet's estimation, rendered his having any thing to do with either crime as improbable, as the facts connected with his servant made the old man's participation, if not sole commission of them, the reverse.

When the mind of a judicial inquirer is fully made up on any subject, it is not easy to shake it: so it was with M. Collet. It would have required much clearer evidence than he was at all likely to get, to have convinced him that Mr. Hargrave was a rogue, and his servant Roger an honest man.

CHAPTER III.

THE satisfactory firmness of decision to which the mind of M. Collet had arrived on the respective merits of Mr. Hargrave and Roger Humphries did not, however, cause any relaxation of his endeavours to obtain facts of all kinds on the subject; and ere the day appointed for the trial of the old man arrived, a considerable degree of new light had been thrown upon the matter.

It is not necessary to follow step by step every movement of this intelligent person towards the object which he had in view; nor is it intended to give any detailed account of the subsequent examinations or of the trial which followed, beyond what is necessary for making the final result known to the reader.

The advice of Signor Julio Ruperto respecting the postilions was followed, and their testimony confirmed that of Ruperto in every particular to which their evidence went. The next step, of course, was to repair to the spot to which these men had conveyed the lady ; and what followed from this must be related rather at length, because the consequences of it were of sufficient importance to render all minor details concerning the evidence brought forward against Roger, unnecessary.

On entering the house pointed out to him as that to which the lady carried from Mr. Hargrave's garden had been conveyed, M. Collet had every reason to believe, that whatever attention might have been shewn her in other respects, the character of the inmates had not been considered as a matter of much importance. In fact, he perceived at once by an official glance of his experienced eye, that though the mansion (at the distance of about half a league from Paris) was exceedingly well *montée*, handsome, and even elegant in its furniture and fitting up, and having about

it (almost) every appearance of being the dwelling *de gens comme il faut*,—the inmates were very unmistakably infamous.

In answer to his first inquiries respecting a lady who had been brought there early in the morning of the 24th April, he was told, in an accent of saucy indifference, that he had blundered, for that no such person was or ever had been there.

With quiet and patient perseverance he went on for a considerable time endeavouring to convince the lady who appeared to be the mistress of the house, that she would save herself a considerable degree of trouble by rendering easy the task he had undertaken of finding this lady dead or alive. But the more he endeavoured to make his inquiries in a tone gentle and conciliatory, the more did the insolence of that in which he was answered increase, till at length he found it necessary to cut the matter short, by informing the person he addressed that he found himself under the disagreeable necessity of calling for the assistance of a few official individuals who awaited his

orders without in order to search her dwelling from the garret to the cellar in hope of finding some trace of the person he inquired for.

In saying this, however, the gentleman's manner did not by many degrees change so greatly as did that of the lady who answered him. From a jeering, gibing insolence, which had more than once given him to understand that if he became too troublesome, his ejectment would be a process neither long nor difficult, her tone became that of the most gentle, penitent, helpless, and obedient of human beings.

Without any further difficulty Madame Renny, for so she called herself, confessed that her husband had consented to receive a lady, who, from the exact coincidence of time, she concluded must be the person M. Collet inquired for. This lady, she said, had been represented to them as a young person about to elope from her family with a lover every way unworthy of her; and that, in consequence of this information, they had agreed to receive and keep her in close custody for a

month ; one half of the charges for this service being very handsomely paid in advance, and the other half stipulated for at the end of that time, when her friends would, it was said, come forward and remove her.

M. Collet gave himself not much trouble in sifting this statement in order to discover what portion of it might be true and what false ; but testifying some little impatience that it might speedily be brought to a close, demanded to be instantly led into the presence of the lady.

There was exactly that sort of authority in the accent with which this demand was made that was calculated to ensure obedience in the quarter to which it was addressed ; and with no further reply than "*Certainement, mais certainement, monsieur !*" Madame Renny led the way to a door on the third floor, the key of which she drew from her pocket ; and, throwing it open, exclaimed, "*Mais entrez, monsieur, je vous prie !*"

The melancholy and completely dispirited look of the pretty young woman, whom he

found in solitary possession of the handsome apartment to which he was thus admitted, really touched the feelings of the commissaire, and it was in a voice of great kindness that he said, “ Forgive my intrusion, madame, but I entreat you to tell me if you are the wife of M. Bertrand ? ”

The question seemed to act like the infusion of new life into the pale and dejected being to whom it was addressed. She sprung towards the commissaire with extended arms, that looked as if they intended to envelope him in a close embrace ; but, stopping short before she had fully reached him, she clasped her hands together, and exclaimed with a look of ecstasy, “ *Mais oui, monsieur ! — Mais oui, je suis sa femme ! — Je suis Madame Bertrand !* ”

The interval which elapsed between this moment and that which restored her to the arms of her husband was as short as possible ; and that worthy man must have been as prone to receive, harbour, and nourish suspicion as Othello himself, could he for a single instant have doubted the truth of the statement which

he then received from his restored and most happy little wife.

When the first raptures which followed their meeting were over, and Madame Bertrand had time to answer the inquiries addressed to her officially and extra-officially respecting the abduction and the robbery which followed, she gave the most clear and distinct account of the whole affair ; but positively denied that Mr. Hargrave had any thing whatever to do with it beyond the having led her into what she called the “*Serre*,” and opening “a door, or a window, or a curtain, or something, to let in a little air, because it was so very hot.” She then went on to state that Mr. Hargrave, who had always behaved to her in the most polite manner possible, had taken her by the hand and led her forward towards the opening for a step or two, when he suddenly turned round just as they had reached it, and she believed that somebody had called him, though she did not see any person near them at the time. But she distinctly remembered hearing Mr. Hargrave say, “*Oui, monseigneur*,” and then

he dropped her hand, and the very next moment, and before she could step back to see if was the Prince of *****, as she supposed, an arm from without seized hold of her, dragged her forward into the cold open air, and in the next instant she found herself almost stifled in the folds of an enormously thick cloak that was thrown over her. In spite of this, however, she stated that she attempted to scream ; but, for what seemed to her a very long time, though, perhaps, it might not have been above a quarter of an hour, she was kept pinioned down with the most cruel violence, while the cloak was held so closely round her head as quite to stifle all the cries she endeavoured to utter, and very nearly to prevent her breathing at all. During this time she was dragged along the ground, and one time lifted off it, and carried for a short distance. And then she fancied that there were two or more men near her, for she heard voices whispering ; but this was only for a moment, and almost directly after she was again lifted for a little way and then set down

again, and the cloak was then thrown open and all her diamonds torn away from her in the most quick and violent manner possible. And at that moment she again tried to scream, but having taken the diamonds from her head, the robber again almost stifled her in the cloak, while all the time he kept on tearing the jewels from her dress; till, at last, when all were removed, she was again half dragged, half carried along, for what appeared a much longer way than she had yet gone, and then she was suddenly thrust forward into a carriage, the door of which was instantly closed, and she was driven off at full speed till she reached the house where M. Collet had found her. Nothing she could say, from the time she entered it, had ever been listened to with the slightest attention any more than if the people had been deaf and dumb. All she wanted, both of food and clothes, were brought her, but always without a word being said. Her door was constantly kept locked, and she had never been permitted to leave the two rooms assigned for her use, from the moment she

had first entered them till M. Collet handed her down-stairs and into that carriage that had brought him there.

Often as the little lady had to repeat this story, she never varied in it, but seemed perfectly to have retained her recollection during the whole of her very terrible adventure.

On being asked whether she had, at any moment, sufficiently seen the person of the robber to identify him, she replied that she feared not, for that during the time that the jewels were snatched from her head, which was the only moment in which it was possible to see him, the darkness was such as would have made it very difficult to distinguish one person from another; besides which, she thought that the man had a mask on, for when she tried to look in his face she saw nothing but blackness. She stated the man to have been very tall, and this was the only circumstance in his appearance concerning which she appeared to be at all certain.

It will readily be imagined that the return of Madame Bertrand under such circum-

stances, and with such a tale to tell, again made her a personage of great interest and notoriety, even though her diamonds did not return with her. In fact, all Paris talked of nothing else ; the papers were full of it, and considerably before poor Roger Humphries (now universally recognised as the culprit) was brought to trial, there was scarcely a journal which did not venture to declare, upon exceedingly sure grounds, that it was well known he would be sent to the galleys for life.

When made acquainted, indeed, with the monstrous crimes charged against him, for he stood accused of the robbery near Riccardo's as well as that of Madame Bertrand, the poor man, convinced that he had blundered in supposing that his master's honoured name had ever been implicated in such atrocities, rescinded his confession, and declared that he knew not what he had been understood to confess when he had owned himself guilty.

Unfortunately, however, this contradiction of his own words produced an effect as far as possible from being favourable to him ; for,

not only did it appear as an incontrovertible proof of falsehood, but by changing the object of those employed to question him from endeavouring to make him declare the circumstances of the crime of which he had avowed himself to be guilty back again, as it were, to the making him confess that he was guilty at all, he lost the very important advantage which was likely to accrue to him in a court of justice from the inconsistencies which were sure to be detected in a statement so vague as that which he had previously made.

In fact, had he continued to declare himself guilty, while still perfectly ignorant, poor fellow, of the crime committed, it is impossible but that the truth, as far as related to himself at least, must have been discovered; and however guilty of bearing false witness against himself, he might have been shewn thereby, he must have been acquitted of acts, of which, even while he confessed them, he was sure to prove himself so profoundly ignorant.

As it was, however, every thing turned against him. Madame Bertrand having been

requested to look at his tall gaunt figure, declared that such was exactly the height of the man who had torn her jewels from her, though the manner in which he was wrapped in a cloak prevented her judging further of his appearance. The white-handled hammer found buried with the mutilated settings, was sworn to by many of Mr. Hargrave's servants as the property of Roger Humphries, who had a turn for nick-nack carpentry, which had led him to become master of many tools. These, and various accidental circumstances besides, either discovered or invented by the malicious Querin, and all turned to the best account in the many private interviews with which he was favoured by the official authorities, whose duty it was to seek for evidence, sufficed to make up a case against Roger too strong to admit a particle of doubt in the minds of any who listened to it; and never did less doubt remain on the minds of the public respecting the result of a trial than on this memorable occasion.

For, was there a single individual in all

Paris who did not listen to all that was said on the subject? Were there any so high or so low as not to be interested in an affair, the details of which involved the names of so many well-known individuals?

Prince Frederic of * * * * * delayed his departure from Paris till the trial was over.

Count Romanhoff confessed that, despite his passionate love of travel, there was no expedition which could possibly be proposed, even with Alfred Coventry for a companion, which could induce him to stir an inch till he had enjoyed the satisfaction of seeing that most superlative old villain condemned to labour in chains for the remainder of his life. And Alfred Coventry, far from urging a departure from which he expected no pleasure, felt more interest in the fate of the old man, rogue as he was, who had been one in the establishment which waited upon Mademoiselle de Cordillac, than he would have done in that of almost any other individual. The subject was, at least, a blessing to the newspapers, both French and English; and very ingenious,

on both sides of the water, were the arguments by which the whole train of Roger Humphries' iniquities were made clear. As a confidential servant of Mr. Hargrave's he had, doubtless, been in the habit of attending him to his club, which perfectly well accounted for the old villain's knowing when and where to pounce upon his victims in that quarter; while the same confidential familiarity with all that was going on in the premises of his gay master might naturally have suggested the possibility for effecting the robbery of Madame Bertrand.

Another circumstance greatly against old Roger was the disappearance of Ruperto. This man, upon the discovery of Madame Bertrand, began to suspect that his share in the business was likely enough to bring him into trouble. He was, in truth, greatly astonished at learning that she was still near Paris, as he firmly believed her to be, as he had said, in England, under the protection of his faithless employer; but her having been robbed and then violently detained as a prisoner in the lodgings which, by his own confession,

he had provided for her, converted the gallant adventure into a sort of job, with which he by no means wished to mix himself. Being a remarkably clever person, all cities, as he was wont to boast, were alike to him, and rather than run the risk of being involved in the inquiry about to take place, he abandoned his hope of Mr. Hargrave's debt and the fair city of Paris together; so that, when his much-esteemed new acquaintance, M. Collet, waited upon him at the lodgings to which he had given him the address, the bird was flown, nor did any subsequent efforts of that repentant official gentleman enable him to atone for the negligence which had permitted such a man's leaving his *bureau* after he had once entered it, for, considerably before any search was set on foot for him by the police, he had embarked on board a vessel at Havre, intending to proceed, *via* Archangel, to the real metropolis of all the Russias; and by this fellow's evasion, which at once threw doubts upon his evidence respecting Mr. Har-

grave, while it clearly identified himself with the crime actually committed, another material chance for eliciting the truth was removed, and the fate of the innocent old man apparently sealed past hope.

CHAPTER IV.

WHILE these busy scenes were going on in Paris, every thing seemed to wear a very peaceable aspect at the Castle of the Lake. Though it might be that the tranquillity of its inmates was not quite so heartfelt as it appeared to the few simple souls who were its only witnesses.

Hans Klopmann and Gertrude Weiber, now become, by the blessing of Father Mark, man and wife, were both too busy and too happy to be likely to look deeper than the surface, or to discover that the folks who had got Mummel leave to inhabit one of the Gross-berzag's own residences, who had plenty and plenty of money, with nothing to do but to amuse themselves, with the favour and good

company of Father Mark into the bargain, could be otherwise than the very happiest people in the world, save and except their own happy selves.

Neither did Father Mark, though almost their daily visitor, suspect that there was any cause for anxiety among them beyond what met his pastoral ear from his two penitents. As for the heretic Adèle, he would have trembled, good man, had he found himself paying much heed to her in any way. But the confessions of Sabina shewed no inquietude, except for the safety and comfort of her father, and her gentle-hearted confessor failed not to assure her that the cause of his concealment was such, as not only to ensure the protection of those who ("praised be the saints!") were still the first and the most powerful among the sons of men, but, also, to draw upon him the especial blessing of the Virgin Mary and all the heavenly host, making it plain to all who saw with the eye of faith, that whatever he had lost and abandoned of earthly joys and earthly honours would be made up to

him ten thousand-fold by the holier joys and higher honours which still awaited him, and that, probably, on earth as well as in heaven !

All this was, of course, a great comfort to her. But, perhaps, it only left her heart more at liberty to ponder over tender thoughts that now, as she perpetually told herself, brought no danger with them.

Sabina was at this time a whole year older than when she had loved to lend her imagination, and almost her belief, to the popular superstitions of the region which was now so strangely become her home ; and she no longer tried to persuade herself that Goethe and Walter Scott believed in the lifelike fables with which their magic wands *poetized* the earth. Yet still the best, and, perhaps, the only atonement she found on the borders of the fairy lake for all the brilliant gaiety of Paris, lay in the visionary connexion which her fancy persisted in tracing between the hunter of the rock and the royal prince who had left his never-to-be-forgotten image on her heart. So far, indeed, did this fanci-

ful connexion go, that there were moments (especially if she climbed to the well-remembered rock alone) when a wish would arise that she might once more see that hunter youth, and so satisfy her mind that he either was or was not the same, and no other, as he with whom had begun and ended all of earthly love to which she could ever open her heart. And then wild thoughts, nearly approaching to doubts, as to whether there might not be powers and influences floating about us, which ruled our destiny by means of which philosophy knows nothing, would steal upon her, and so interest her spirit in their soft and shadowy folds, that for hours together she would forget every thing except the dear delight of idle speculation. But she dared not breathe a word to her sister of these solitary musings, for she felt that they would not bear the test of discussion, and dreaded a light jest on themes that seemed to her little less than sacred. It would, perhaps, have been better if she had ; for, in truth, any thought upon which she could have framed

a jest would have been a relief to poor Adèle, whose melancholy musings on her own sad position, and that of the dear sister she so tenderly loved, and for whose sake she had endured so much (all of which, but for her, she could have turned from and escaped for ever), grew sadder and sadder with every passing day.

Had there been no crime, no vice, mixed in the cloud which overshadowed them, the high-minded girl would have borne it with the unshrinking courage of a martyr, whose very sufferings are a source of pride and glory. But now, the loss of caste, the loss of friends, the loss of the man she loved, and who she had so lately learned loved her, was accompanied by the ever-present and tormenting doubt of whether she had acted rightly in thus linking herself to crime and dishonour. On this point her ideas fluctuated with painful uncertainty. There were moments when she thought of her father and of the long-descended, noble race from whom he sprung, till her burning cheeks tingled with shame

as she remembered the position in which she stood, and the nature of the association to which she submitted herself. And then, had her mind been constituted like that of Sabina, it is by no means improbable that she would have seen shadowy phantoms flitting round her, armed *cap-à-pié*, and raising before her eyes their burnished shields, quartered with *fleur-de-lis*, and bearing for device “*Sans peur et sans reproche.*” But even as it was, she was sufficiently miserable, and it often required an exertion of all that remained of her former energy of character in order to preserve before Sabina such an appearance of tranquillity as might save her young sister from the misery of perceiving how utterly every hope of happiness was destroyed within her.

Meanwhile, the health and spirits of Mr. Hargrave seemed daily to improve; the fits of gloomy silence into which, upon their first arrival at Gernsbach, he used to sink, for hours together, to the inexpressible grief of Sabina, but by no means to the surprise of Adèle,

returned no more. He was not, indeed, so gaily talkative as he had been in the days of his Parisian splendour, but even when he was quite silent there was no trace of gloom about him : he ate well, walked actively, and was sometimes in the company of Father Mark, for hours together, on the borders of the little lake ; and in answer to his anxious daughter's inquiries respecting his nights, assured her that he had never slept better.

Different as was the state of mind of the two girls respecting Mr. Hargrave, they were, perhaps, equally surprised at the manner in which he bore this banishment from all the objects which had hitherto occupied and embellished his life, and the profound stillness of the existence which had taken their place.

Adèle wondered that a man so loaded with disgrace and sin could wear such an air of peace, and apparently self-satisfied composure ; while Sabina marvelled that the gay, light, social spirit of her beloved father could endure with such admirable serenity a change so very violent and so very sad. To her eyes

his character rose into something little short of sublime as she contemplated this admirable resignation; but to the unhappy Adèle the effect of it was most painfully the reverse. Had she wanted any additional argument to strengthen her in her new faith, she would have found it in contemplating the ease with which her Roman Catholic step-father seemed to shield himself from every feeling of remorse by drawing closer and closer the intercourse between himself and his confessor.

But in the inferences which followed her observations, she did Father Mark injustice. It is possible, indeed, that had she been fully acquainted with all the Church of Rome had to do in the matter, her reflections upon its influence might not have been more favourable than at present; nevertheless, as far as Father Mark was concerned, she was unjust. For neither did he, in the very slightest degree, value or desire the intimate sort of intercourse into which circumstances had led him with Mr. Hargrave; nor were the dainty little dinners (which that gentleman's accurate

acquaintance with the art of cookery, combined with the *gasthaus* ability of Gertrude, enabled him to offer, and which, compared with the frugal meal at his mother's table, were perfectly luxurious) any atonement to him for the loss of his wonted colloquial intercourse with the birds who inhabit his favourite thickets, or the flowers, from whom he ventured to receive incense, without tormenting his conscience with fears that he was defrauding the Church. Still less was there any possibility that his pure and simple spirit could have been won by the wealth of all the mines that ever man ransacked, as Adèle would have known could she have seen the innocent look of unfeigned indifference with which he laid upon the table a magnificent diamond which Mr. Hargrave had presented to him with these coaxing words,—

“ Let me, Father Mark, enjoy the supreme satisfaction of knowing that one of the gems which in my younger and more thoughtless days ministered to my vanity, has become sacred and holy by passing into the possession

of a minister of the one only holy Catholic and Apostolic Church ! So shall my worldly sin, in having worn it proudly, be absolved, washed out, atoned for, and forgiven ! ”

And, having laid the sparkling treasure on the good man’s hand, which he had seized upon and turned palm-upwards to receive it, Mr. Hargrave crossed himself on brow and breast, knit his fingers together in the true orthodox Popish clasp, and, dropping his eyes, appeared by the rapid movement of his compressed lips to be uttering a prayer.

Father Mark immediately crossed himself too, and remained not only respectfully but reverentially silent, till Mr. Hargrave’s muttered orison was concluded, and then said, having with the greatest difficulty mastered a yawn,—

“ Not for much, my son, would I reject an offering which might tend to bring peace to your soul, especially when intended, as this evidently is, as a pious propitiation to the holy Church. But if your purpose hold of presenting yourself at Rome as a candidate for

the sacrament of ordination, and as a professed monk of the most holy order of St. Dominic, I would suggest that whatever wealth you have to bestow should reach our holy and blessed mother the Church then and there. It will be far easier for those with whom you will be brought into contact at that time to bring your oblation to the pious uses for which it is designed, than for me ; and it is for this reason, and for this reason only," continued the sincere and honest bigot, " that I venture to reject it."

Then calculating the time he had that morning given to Mr. Hargrave, with as much conscientious exactitude as if the hours had been passed in the Roman Catholic exercise called "*meditation*," he rose to take his leave, having the sweet freshness of the neighbouring forest, and the delicious quiet he was going to find there, so strongly in his thoughts, that he almost felt the luxury of the change before he had made it.

" Nay, do not leave me, Father Mark!" said Mr. Hargrave, reluctantly taking up the

rejected stone, and concealing it in his purse,—
“ do not leave me! I have displayed the
whole map of my once worldly soul before
you, and hang upon every breath uttered by
one anointed and received by the blessed
Church as her priest and servant, in the
humble hope of becoming myself one day
like unto him, and set apart sacred and sworn
to her service.”

This of course could not be spoken without a good deal of crossing, in which the weary but observant priest thought himself obliged to join; while his spirit, still as volant as that of a schoolboy, was bearing him away up hill and down hill, faster—alas! much faster—than he dared to follow it. Father Mark had still to disengage himself from his fervent penitent, and that too without giving his priest-ridden conscience any cause to reproach him with indifference to the interests of the Church; and this was no easy task for him, poor man! Not only had Mr. Hargrave given him to understand, as hinted above, that his purpose was to dedicate himself to

the service of the Church, and to offer that service at Rome, but had informed him also that, notwithstanding the enormous sacrifices he had made of his hereditary wealth to the cause of the pious monarch whose interest he espoused, he still possessed, in diamonds and other precious stones, a sufficient treasure to make him feel that, by dedicating it and himself to the one and only Church, he might make an acceptable offering.

To the mimosa-like sensitiveness of Father Mark's feelings on all subjects connected with the authority under which he had determined to live, this was enough to make Mr. Hargrave an object of great and conscientious importance, though (for some reason or other, which the good father sought not to inquire into) he could not manage to make him one of respect. Not, however, that he had the remotest suspicion that his new penitent had ever been guilty of any act or deed to justify his dislike; but, nevertheless, he could not for the life of him feel any sincere and genuine interest in any single thing he said. The

more conscious the good priest became of this, the more impossible he felt it to be that he should ever conquer it; so much the more a great deal did he labour to do every thing, and neglect nothing, which his duty as a churchman required.

There was scarcely one of the seven deadly sins which Father Mark would not as willingly have committed, as permit his mind to examine why it was that the pope, cardinals, abbots, bishops, &c. &c. should, one and all, be so anxious to obtain the handling and management of that vile dross, which their vows had rendered so useless to them. All that he knew on the subject being that *so it was*, all he had to do was, of course, to forward their views and wishes whenever it fell in his way; and as this had rarely happened in the course of his quiet life to an extent so great as that which seemed to offer itself at present, his eagerness to do nothing that might check the pious purpose of the neophyte was very exactly in proportion to his own utter indifference on the subject. So that his

days, for the most part, passed in a constant combat between his desire to get away from Mr. Hargrave's pompous humility and loudly professing piety, and his terrors lest by doing so he should betray his vowed duty to the Church.

Had Mr. Hargrave understood Father Mark only as well as Father Mark, with all his ignorance of past events and all his inclination to be deceived, knew him, a great deal of very useless annoyance would have been spared. For Mr. Hargrave having read Father Mark's work “On the Authority of the Church,” as the majority of fashionable gentlemen brought up at Eton would read a Latin treatise on such a subject, he had picked out enough of it to persuade him that the good father was one of those who conceived persons of his profession could not be made too great a fuss with. Alas! for the painful hours which this blunder caused the poor priest to spend in listening to Mr. Hargrave's long-winded homilies, when he might have been hearkening to the music of a water-

fall, or inhaling the pure breath of nature, instead of the nauseous suspirations of hypocrisy!

But the wish to do his ill-understood duty was very strong within him, and Father Mark reseated himself now, as he had often done before, to endure the vain man's exhibition of himself in a new character, and to encourage his declared and oft-repeated intention to bestow all he possessed upon the Church; without yielding to the strong temptation of telling him, that if he bestowed himself too he would mix so much dross with his ore as would make the advantage, in the estimation of some at least, very doubtful. But upon the present, as upon all former occasions, the repentant philosopher consoled himself with the hope that the restraint and distaste which he thus compelled himself to endure would be accepted as penance for the involuntary flashes of unfettered thought with which he was conscious that he was still occasionally visited.

To a mind of such moderate-sized dimen-

sions as that of Mr. Hargrave, personal vanity will often become a sort of defence (though puffy and unsubstantial) against the vicissitudes of fortune. The tremendous downfal he had met; the overthrow of all his hopes; the deprivation of all best liked and most valued, would have been almost too bitter to bear, had he not been so cased in the cotton of self-conceit as to have the vital warmth of vanity still kept alive within him.

Feeling pretty tolerably well convinced that the world, commonly so called, was no longer a theatre upon which he could advantageously display himself, this same vital warmth gave him energy to turn his thoughts towards another; and the cloister, the consistory, the conclave of pope and cardinals,—nay, the very papal throne itself, all pressed forward upon his imagination as the scenery and decorations of a new one.

And very splendid decorations, and a very brilliant scene, they afforded. The long and graceful vestments; the scarlet, the violet, and the ermine—even the white satin slipper,

attracting eyes to the Apollo-like foot,—were all remembered ; and Mr. Hargrave was quite aware that Apollo himself, had fifty *mortal* winters passed over him, could hardly assume a more graceful costume than that worn by the dignitaries of the Church of Rome. And then Mr. Hargrave had read the enchanting papal biography of Roscoe, and really thought — a little induced thereto, perhaps, by his actual position — that after the first flush of youthful comeliness was past, it was hardly possible for a man to display himself to greater advantage than in the magnificent arena offered by the Church of Rome, or to settle down upon a cushion more delightfully soft than those prepared for her favourites.

Fortunately, most fortunately, as he now felt, he had never, from the time he visited Rome with his highly connected lady, lost any opportunity of recalling himself favourably to the noble cardinal, her uncle. A great variety of graceful Parisian presents had crossed the Alps, chiefly for the sake of receiving in return (which could be so advan-

tageously shewn to his confessor) a nepotive-paternal benediction from a member of the sacred college.

Here, then, was one assured friend at Rome. And might not the cause for which he fled from Paris, and with which his uncle cardinal was already slightly acquainted—might not this cause win more?

There were moments when the fumes of Mr. Hargrave's new and strongly fermenting piety so intoxicated his brain, that he was tempted to believe a ray of direct inspiration had fallen upon Mademoiselle de Cordillac when she suggested a plot for the restoration of Charles X. as the cause of his running away from the police.

CHAPTER V.

THOUGH Sabina still continued to be the active *ménagère* of the establishment at the Castle of the Lake, her sister readily and willingly aided her in every thing wherein her exertions could avail towards the comfort and well-being of the little household. Clothed in the ordinary dress of Alsatian peasant girls, carefully rejecting every trace of former luxury which might attract attention, they began to find that they might walk about with a basket on the arm, and the steady air of busy occupation in their gait, without attracting any very alarming degree of attention. A good deal of mystery was still preserved respecting their having become actually inmates and dwellers in “the residence.” Some few asserted this

to be the case, but many more denied it; and as Frau Weiber purchased all they wanted in her own name, and assisted, with considerable skill, to keep up mystification and doubt upon the subject among all those who frequented her house, the result was exactly such a degree of uncertainty as was most favourable for lengthened concealment; for if any, upon good authority, stated that they KNEW the château to be inhabited, there were ever enough to laugh the fanciful believer to scorn; and the more vehement his assertions, the less he was believed.

“ Use lessens marvel,”

and it lessens fear too. Expeditions and undertakings, which at their first arrival would have appeared wild and impossible to both the sisters, speedily became things of daily occurrence; till at length, feeling a longing desire for a book or two beyond what their good priest could lend them, and hearing that many which would be now accounted most precious treasures could be procured at Baden-Baden, they resolutely determined to set off upon a

walk to that place ; braving, under the shelter of their peasant dresses and Sabina's excellent colloquial German, all danger of being unpleasantly noticed.

How well, as they set off together upon this expedition, did they both remember the time when they had traversed the same beautiful road amidst all the luxurious contrivances which wealth invents to make fatigue unknown ! Had a voice direct from heaven told them then, that before the earth had completed her daily journey three hundred and sixty-five times, they should be pacing the lengthened way on foot in the garb of peasants, and with no hope, no wish, beyond being received and greeted as such by all whom they might encounter, would they not have said that the idle prophecy suited well with the neighbourhood of fibbing fairies, whose fitting delight it might be to persuade folks that

“ All that is, is not ? ”

Yet that long walk was not without its pleasures. The day was one of pure, bright,

spring-tide sunshine, but tempered, at least on the lofty ridge they had to traverse, by a delicious breeze, which made the very act of drawing breath, a luxury. They reached the well-remembered and beautiful little town, therefore, without any painful feeling of fatigue, having, before they descended the Herrnwiesse Hill, had recourse, each to her own basket, for refreshment, carefully stowed there by the neat-handed Gertrude. Like all wise travellers, they chose their place of rest beside a rapid rill of bright clear water, which completed the repast; and when they rose from the grassy sod on which they had seated themselves, they certainly looked not at all the worse for their long walk.

They perfectly well knew where to find the shop most likely to furnish what they wanted; and with looks demure, and eyes which, though not "leaden," certainly seemed to "love the ground," they took their way thither. Nothing in the least degree startling or alarming occurred to them. Adèle bought an English Bible, which she could not get at Gernsbach,

and the delighted Sabina made herself mistress of Shakspeare, in one huge volume of ill-printed columns. Various other purchases were added to these, and, their business being ended, Sabina paid for them, and desired that they might be sent by a certain weekly carrier, of whom she spake with a proper degree of positive information, giving as the address "Frau Weiber, at the Black Eagle, Gernsbach." The only question by which she was troubled in return was uttered by the quiet, civil master of the shop, as he took down this address. "Are all these books for the Frau Weiber?" said he. But Sabina's short but gentle answer, "No, sir, they are for my master," seemed perfectly to satisfy him, and he made no further inquiries.

As soon as Adèle had chosen her Bible, she took the liberty to seat herself in a distant corner of the shop, beside a table covered with newspapers, leaving Sabina, who was now, as usual, the spokeswoman, to transact all the other business herself.

The idea of obtaining a newspaper had often

occurred to Adèle, as a means of looking back upon the world they had left, which she longed for, yet dared not venture to seek; but now, as they lay before her in tempting abundance and sufficient confusion, her quick eye caught sight of “Galignani’s Messenger,” and, well knowing the satisfactory universality of its *multum in parvo* columns, she eagerly stretched out her hand and seized it. The leading article, the *party-coloured* extracts from the English papers, the well-digested mass of all the news of Europe, was all passed by with more than indifference—with an impatience that, still and silent as she was, seemed to stop her breath as she turned to the paragraphs headed
“PARIS.”

Poor Adèle! what did she hope to see there? The name of Coventry? It was not likely. The history of her step-father’s acts, and her own and Sabina’s departure in his company? She felt, as this last thought suggested itself, that she doubted if she could see it, and not betray her agony to all who looked on her. Yet still she read on, of this, and of that, and

Heaven knows what, with such eagerness of attention, that it may be doubted if a cannon let off beside her could have disturbed it.

At length she came to the following paragraph:—“The interest excited by the approaching trial of the old Englishman, Roger Humphries, is greater than any merely private trial has produced for years. It is now generally known, beyond the possibility of doubt, that this desperate ruffian, who still preserves the same obstinate silence, was not only the robber, and, as many thought, the assassin of Madame Bertrand, but also the perpetrator of the daring and atrocious robbery committed some weeks ago on a gentleman returning to his lodgings from the *salons* of Riccardo. No proof has yet appeared against him respecting the two former attacks of the same nature made against persons leaving the same establishment, an accurate account of which appeared in this paper; but it is very strongly suspected that the three robberies, so similar in object, time, and place, must have been planned and executed by the same bold hand.

But whether these former crimes be brought home to the prisoner or not, the sentence expected to be passed upon him is condemnation to hard labour in the galleys for life."

* * * * *

The miserable Adèle contrived to read this terrible statement twice, from beginning to end, without either screaming or fainting ; but she was heart-struck, and felt as if she had never known real suffering till that hour.

The faithful old domestic, who had loved her from a child with such affectionate devotion—who would have done, and had done, any thing and every thing she had asked of him — what was his reward ? Alone, unfriended, in a foreign land, and brought to condemnation for the crimes of one whom she had withdrawn from the hands of justice, and even, as it seemed, from all suspicion !

Did she rejoice at finding how successful had been her efforts for this precious step-father ? Even for Sabina's sake did she rejoice at it ? Alas, no ! She only felt that she had made herself the participator of crime, and

that, by sheltering the guilty, she had destroyed the innocent!

The paper was still in her hand ; her fixed eye still rested on the half-read column ; and in the next moment she discovered that the anguish it was her portion to endure was not yet complete ; for further on she found another paragraph, referring at considerable length to the manner in which the old man had been apprehended, while stealing back to his master's house after committing the robbery, and commenting upon the singular chance which had thus thrown him into the hands of justice, by means of a delay in the departure of some of the guests, which, naturally enough, the old villain had not expected. Reference was again made to the contumacious silence uniformly preserved by the prisoner, accompanied by a remark, "that his singular obstinacy in this respect had been far from beneficial to him, for it was that which, in the first instance, fixed suspicion upon him, the mere circumstance of his being seen about to enter his master's house at half-past five in the

morning being by no means sufficient grounds even for his being apprehended. But, happily for the interests of justice, his attempt to retreat out of sight, and his subsequent stubborn refusal to state where he had been or how employed, had sufficiently indicated his guilt, and led by degrees to the discovery of all the circumstances which proved it."

Here, then, was the full history of the faithful fellow's misfortune. It was in order to keep HER secret that he had given reason to suspect he had one of his own. And for this he was calumniated, outraged, imprisoned, and about to suffer what would be, perhaps, worse to him than the extremest penalty of the law!

Could the generous-hearted Adèle de Cordillac bear this? Could she remain in quiet security beside the real culprit whom she had snatched from danger, while the steadfast-hearted and devoted old man endured for her sake—for her HONOUR's sake—this frightful accumulation of misery?

* * * * *

The business upon which Sabina had been

engaged was completed ; she turned to her sister to say so, and they left the shop. Sabina made some remark on the acquisitions they had made, but Adèle made no reply, and they walked on in silence, which was supposed by the “ungalled” Sabina to arise from prudence, as they were still among the haunts of men, which was now always a signal for silence between them. But when they were again mounting the steep Herrnwiesse, and had nearly reached the sylvan solitudes which stretched away before them, on arriving at its summit Sabina said, “I fear you are tired, Adèle?”

“Oh, very tired !” she replied ; “too tired to talk, dearest ! Let us get home as fast as we can, and without exhausting our strength by speaking.”

After this they walked on in silence. Sabina, a little anxious about this over-fatigue for her sister, but with good hope that one of the old sofas, and a supper such as Gertrude’s solicitude for them would be sure to prepare, might set all right again ; and then, as usual, she

gave the rein to her wandering fancy, and was speedily lost in a visionary world of her own, wherein the two figures which were ever her companions when she thus indulged herself sometimes careered on either side of her, and sometimes were mysteriously blended into one.

It was, perhaps, hardly possible for two minds to be in a state more perfectly dissimilar than were those of the two sisters as they thus walked on, side by side together. While the one was enjoying with unchecked freedom the wanton vagaries of her young imagination, the other was sternly bending all the strength and power of her mind upon the tremendous task that lay before her. That Roger Humphries should be saved, let who would perish by it, was a point already settled in her mind, as firmly as faith and truth could settle it, and that almost before she was conscious that she had formed the resolution. It was, in fact, an impulse which decided this, more sudden and powerful in its action than any deliberate process of judgment and volition could have been; but it was an impulse

that every after-thought strengthened, and Adèle would rather have relinquished her life than have attempted to combat it.

There was something terrible in the distinctness and intensity with which she contemplated the mode and manner of achieving this. She saw all that lay before her as plainly as if a pictured chart was spread palpably before her eyes, on which was marked every rock and every quicksand through which she must steer her terrible way. Ay, and she heard, too, plainly as if a "chisel" had been found to "cut breath," and bring its simulated likeness to the sense, all the questions that must follow her declaration of the old man's innocence. Must it not be proved by her avowal of her interview with him and of the errand on which he had been sent by her? But this shook her not. She saw it, she heard it, she knew it all; but it weighed not a single feather against the overruling motive that kept her purpose steady.

Had she known, too, as certainly that the release of Roger, which she was to purchase

with all this agony, would of necessity be followed by the conviction of the real culprit, it would still have made no difference in that moment of stern, unshrinking justice. Nevertheless, Adèle did remember, even then, that in all that concerned Mr. Hargrave she might imitate the steadfast silence of her faithful messenger, who, rather than betray *her* secret, had permitted himself to be condemned to the fate of the most desperate felon.

Such was the state of mind in which Adèle re-entered her strange home, and prepared to meet the greetings of her step-father.

There was one circumstance in the terrible intelligence she had acquired which was a comfort to her. After well weighing the question, she convinced herself that she might open her whole heart to Sabina concerning the expedition she meditated without any danger of being obliged to enlighten her upon the subject on which she hoped to keep her for ever ignorant. It did not follow of necessity, that because Roger was innocent her father was guilty; and truly rejoiced was poor Adèle

at not being obliged to part with one she so dearly loved with mystery or dissimulation,— a rejoicing the more deeply felt, perhaps, from the consciousness that something very like a hope, fluttered at her heart, of not living to return after her task was accomplished.

But although she thus contemplated the speaking openly to Sabina on the subject of her intended departure for Paris, she resolved to delay doing so till she had communicated to her step-father the astounding intelligence she brought; and accordingly, as soon as the meal which awaited their return was over, she desired permission to accompany him for a few moments to a sitting-room peculiarly his own, and in which he always received his punctual but most unwilling confessor.

By well-understood but tacit agreement between the parties, no word had ever been exchanged between Mademoiselle de Cordillac and Mr. Hargrave, relative to the cause of their leaving Paris, since the one short decisive moment in which she gave him to understand that she was acquainted with all

the facts that rendered it necessary. How she had obtained her information was still a mystery to him ; but though by no means without very acute feelings of curiosity on the subject, he would rather have “burst in ignorance” than have given a look or a word which might lead to the return of a confidence which it was little short of agony to think of. It was, therefore, with no very agreeable feelings that he listened to this request from his step-daughter, but to refuse it was wholly out of the question ; and, forcing one of his benignant smiles, he rose with every appearance of alacrity, and presented his arm for her acceptance. This act of politeness, however, Adèle either did not or would not see ; but proceeding with rapid step the way she had invited him to go, she reached the room before him.

“ Will you sit down, my love ? ” said Mr. Hargrave.

“ No, sir, I thank you ; I would rather not. I shall not, I mean, detain you long enough to make it necessary. What I have to tell will be soon said. I have avoided,—very carefully

avoided, any allusion to the cause which brought us here; and nothing but a very terrible necessity leads me to do otherwise now."

It had been her intention to let one speech suffice, and to have told him, with all possible brevity, the facts which she wished him to know; but he trembled so violently on hearing these opening words that she felt compelled to stop, and recommended him to sit down.

"Am I suspected? Am I followed?" he said in a voice that plainly enough confessed the extremity of the terror that shook his limbs like a fit of the ague.

"No, sir; neither the one nor the other," replied Adèle, coldly. "What I have to say does not immediately concern yourself. I have seen a newspaper at Baden, which informs me——" Adèle's voice failed her for a moment, but the next she went on—"which informs me that our old and valued servant, Roger Humphries, has been taken up on suspicion of having robbed Madame Bertrand; and the

evidence against him has been such as to render condemnation to hard labour in the galleys for life, certain."

"God bless my soul! How can this be possible?" said Mr. Hargrave, with a countenance and manner intended to express a vast deal of sorrow and concern, but in the midst of which the very heart of Adèle seemed to read triumph and joy. "I really think, my dearest love, that you must be mistaken."

"No, sir, I am not mistaken," she replied, with a stronger feeling of indignation and dislike than she had ever before been conscious of; "and as a proof that I have neither read nor received this news lightly, I am here expressly to inform you that it is my purpose to set off for Paris immediately, in order to exculpate this innocent and greatly wronged old man."

"Impossible!" exclaimed Mr. Hargrave, in violent agitation. "Impossible, Mademoiselle de Cordillac,—you cannot think of it! Would you really plunge me—would you plunge your sister into the abyss of shame and misery, to

save us from which you have so nobly exerted yourself? I will not believe that such is your intention."

"It is not my intention, Mr. Hargrave," replied Adèle, sedately, "to plunge either my sister or yourself into danger or difficulty of any kind. I fully anticipate the being able to achieve the object I have in view without running any risk of doing so. But in this you must trust me."

"I cannot trust you, rash girl!" exclaimed the terrified man. "What power have you to prove this old man innocent except — the being able to prove another guilty?"

"I can prove an *alibi*, Mr. Hargrave: I can prove that I myself sent Roger upon an errand from which he was returning at the time he was arrested," said Adèle.

"Absurd! Who will believe the story? Who will believe that you sent the old man off upon an errand between four and five o'clock in the morning? The device is too shallow, Adèle,—too preposterously absurd. If you present yourself before a court of justice for

the purpose of proving Roger Humphries innocent, my doom is sealed ! I am lost, destroyed for ever, and Sabina with me ; and when you have seen your sister perish at your feet, then turn to old Roger Humphries for consolation. But do the thing thoroughly, Mademoiselle de Cordillac. Say at once that it is your step-father—the husband of your mother, who has committed this deed. Bring not the sneers of all Paris upon you by saying you knew who it was *not*, but for particular reasons beg to decline telling who it was ; and then apostrophise the shade of your mother, and say that you have done much to save her child from shame ! ”

“ Be not disturbed, sir, by any fears for the result,” replied Adèle, in that quiet tone which shews so plainly that contempt overpowers indignation. “ I shall take care to state nothing which I am not able to prove respecting Roger Humphries, and that without putting it in any one’s power to infer that what he did not do, Mr. Hargrave did.”

“ Let me ask you, Mademoiselle de Cor-

dillac—I have a right to ask you, for more than my life depends upon it—what proofs do you possess that this old man was not employed in the manner suspected at the time the—the robbery was committed?" demanded Mr. Hargrave, almost fiercely.

"This is no moment," replied his step-daughter, "for settling or disputing our respective rights. But I feel no wish to withhold from you the facts I must soon proclaim to all who choose to listen. I sent Roger Humphries with a note to Mr. Coventry at his hôtel; and he left my presence about ten minutes after four o'clock on the morning in question."

No young Englishwoman, twenty-two years of age and perfectly independent, can be a fair judge of what Adèle de Cordillac felt in making this avowal now, and resolving to make it afterwards in public. Her lips trembled, and tears of great suffering started to her eyes. Mr. Hargrave perceived this, and instantly endeavoured to take advantage of it.

"Do I hear rightly?" he said. "Do I

hear Adèle de Cordillac, the descendant of so long a line of noble ancestors, calmly declare that it is her intention to proclaim in Paris, before a public tribunal, that in the dead of night she bribed one of her step-father's serving-men to carry love-notes to a young Englishman at his hôtel ? This is madness,—absolute madness ! And it becomes my bounden duty to prevent it.” Then, rushing to the door, he turned with violence the clumsy key that for years had remained stationary in the lock, and put it in his pocket.

“ You stir not from this room, young lady, till I have your solemn promise upon oath, not to quit this dwelling without my permission, and not to hold any communication, direct or indirect, with any persons out of it, without my concurrence and consent. As the husband of your high-born mother, Mademoiselle de Cordillac, and the representative of your equally noble father, it is my duty to prevent this disgraceful degradation. And I will do it !”

Whatever composure of manner Adèle had

lost in naming Mr. Coventry, she more than recovered now ; and replied in a tone which shewed no consciousness of having degenerated from the noble stocks to which her step-father referred,—“ You must permit me to think, Mr. Hargrave, that the honour of my ancestors is as safe in my keeping as in yours. *Au reste*, I shall certainly not do battle with you for the key of this apartment, nor for that of the château either. You will not fail to remember, long before the freedom you restrain becomes important to me, that it will be for your interest to let me go free, where and when I will. But I have no objection whatever that this door should remain closed against all intruders while I put both myself and you to pain by asking one question, suggested by a phrase I saw in the paper yesterday in reference to Madame Bertrand, and which phrase gave me hope that one very horrible idea which has vaguely, and without any continuous belief in its truth, tormented my imagination, is without foundation. Roger Humphries is said to have been *at one time* suspected of

having murdered that unfortunate lady. Say, sir, did she leave your hands in safety?"

Nothing that Mademoiselle de Cordillac could have said to her step-father, short of assuring him that Roger Humphries had been tried, condemned, and hanged, could have given him so much satisfaction as the expressive doubt which this question indicated.

The eloquent burst of injured innocence which followed was perfectly sublime, and flowed on so long sometimes in touching pathos, sometimes in indignant rage, and sometimes in tender reproaches to the "dear Adèle," who might have known that whatever faults imperious distress had generated, cruelty to woman was not likely to be one of them; that his prisoner began to fear that her boast respecting her fearlessness as to the length of her detention was likely to prove a vain one. However, she had the satisfaction of hearing him explain as he went on, the manner in which he had shed the blood, the traces of which had so greatly shocked her, and was thus relieved from the sickening consciousness

ness as she remembered it that *nothing* could be much more difficult of belief than what she already too well knew to be true — a thought that had haunted her at intervals, despite all the really well-founded reasons she had for hoping that this crowning horror was impossible. But, being fully satisfied on this point, she began to wish herself in her own room, arranging matters for her departure in the morning, and explaining to the still unconscious Sabina all the terrible reasons which rendered it necessary. Seeing, however, that the reproaches of the much-wronged and falsely suspected Hargrave did not appear likely to arrive at their conclusion for a good while to come, she felt it was becoming necessary to find a way to escape from it, and therefore said,—“I am ready, Mr. Hargrave, to apologise for all the wrong I have ever done you by unfounded suspicions, and am happy to find such satisfactory reason for doing so; but,” looking at the little watch she wore within her waist-riband, “it is now seven o’clock, Father Mark will be here immediately, and I would

not wish his wonder and attention to be excited by so unusual a sight as your heretic step-daughter locked up with you. The circumstance would probably not tend to increase his respect for you, and might lead to his addressing some inconvenient questions to me. Pray open the door, Mr. Hargrave."

"Father Mark ! You are always right, Adèle ! You are a most extraordinary girl, indeed ; but tell me, my dear, when do you think of setting off upon this perilous expedition ? Now I think of it, I have no doubt that you will manage it so as to do no harm. Your original suggestion, my dear, respecting the exiled royal family must strictly be kept to whenever there is occasion to speak of me—any alteration there would be very injurious to Sabina. You understand me, my love ? Now go ; we are both of us warm, Adèle, and have mutual need of each other's forgiveness. I accept your apology most willingly, my dear. Now go—go directly, will you, for I think I hear the voice of Father Mark speaking with Gertrude."

He held the door open for her as he spoke, and she walked through it, rejoicing at having discovered so ready a means of frightening her contemptible step-father out of his contemplated opposition. She was little aware, however, how powerful was the spell she had put in action. The name of Father Mark suggested a new train of thought, and Adèle was not more anxious to quit his presence than he was to see her depart.

CHAPTER VI.

MR. HARGRAVE'S ears had not deceived him : it was the voice of Father Mark which he had heard, and the good man stood before him within two minutes after Adèle had disappeared. The interview began by Mr. Hargrave stating that he had much to say to him, and *that* upon a subject which he was sure his reverence to the Church would lead him to consider as highly important. Father Mark breathed one unobtrusive little sigh, and sat himself down with very meek resignation, and such a feeling of true martyr-like submission to penance at his heart, as might have atoned for many a wandering way-side speculation upon the species of intercourse which may exist between the creature and the Creator in

regions not blessed with the over-shadowing presence of the Roman Catholic Apostolic Church—speculations by which he had been a good deal tormented during the whole of that bright breezy day, passed in solitary rambling amidst some of the loveliest scenes of the Mourgthal. As this penitent feeling was both true and lasting, this private interview between the priest and Mr. Hargrave endured for several hours, and Adèle and Sabina passed the remainder of the evening alone.

Then it was that Mademoiselle de Cordillac, for the first time since their sorrows had fallen upon them, spoke with perfect and entire truth and confidence to her young sister, and even in the midst of the miserable intelligence she had to communicate, there was a feeling strongly approaching to pleasure in this return to confidence. The whole history of Roger's arrest, when seen returning to his master's house soon after five o'clock in the morning, exactly as it was related in the papers, might all be safely repeated to Sabina without the slightest allusion to her father. The commen-

tary upon this terrible statement was made with equal quickness by both. It could not be doubted that he was in the act of returning from the errand upon which Adèle had sent him, and it was equally easy to guess that the obstinate silence which the reporter dwelt upon with so much severity was caused by the faithful old man's determination not to betray the delicate secret which had been confided to him.

There could be no second opinion between the sisters as to the course to be pursued. Adèle, who had sent the noble-spirited prisoner upon the business that caused him to be encountered at that suspicious hour,—Adèle, who knew where to apply for corroboration of her own statement by the evidence of the persons he must have seen at the place to which he was sent,—Adèle, who alone of all the world could exonerate the faithful agent from the promise of secrecy which he had pledged to her,—Adèle, in short, notwithstanding all the fearful reasons which made them both tremble as they contemplated the expedition,

and all the exposure and humiliation which it involved, was urged as strenuously by Sabina as by her own generous heart to set off on the morrow upon her return to Paris.

It was now that the affectionate Sabina unconsciously repaid the pity with which Adèle's heart had been wrung for her. It would be difficult to find words to describe the pang she felt as she pictured to herself the scene through which her sister must pass, in presence of the tribunal which had arraigned Roger Humphries, before it could be made aware of his innocence. It was good for Adèle, perhaps, that she felt called upon to soothe the agony she saw produced by this. It obliged her to call forth all the excellent reasons which she had for feeling that the act was one of paramount duty, and that the shrinking from it would condemn her to remorse, ten thousand times more lasting and more bitter to endure than any thing she should feel, even when confessing before all Paris that she had privately despatched a letter in the dead of night to Mr. Coventry. "Oh, true,—most true!" cried

Sabina, throwing her arms around her. “Go, noblest, dearest Adèle! Could I but go with you—could I but believe that I might quit my father at this moment without committing thereby a most deadly sin, I should mind nothing! But to see you set off on this tremendous expedition alone will be very terrible!”

“Not if you remember that it would be a sin for me to stay,” returned Adèle, calmly. “Sabina! we ought to consider the chance which enables me to do this ‘great right’ as one of the greatest blessings that ever befell me. You have only to consider what my condition would have been had I not heard of this till it was too late to save him,—you have only to think of this, Sabina, in order to forget all present inconvenience. And now assist me, dearest, to make my preparations. — I must walk to Baden, and go thence by a diligence; and I am in doubt whether I had better resume my Paris garb here or *en route*. ”

“Here,” replied Sabina,—“here, beyond all doubt, we have nothing to fear from the remarks of Hans and Gertrude—they love us,

both of them, I am quite sure of that; but they must already consider us as beings enveloped in mystery, and a little more or a little less of it cannot signify here. Whereas *en route*, Adèle, your appearing at one moment in the character of your faithful Susanne, and the next in that of your faithful Gertrude, could hardly fail of producing disagreeable results." This was too reasonable to leave any further doubt on the subject, and the two girls set themselves to make such preparations as were required, or rather such as were in their power, for Adèle's adventurous journey.

"Have you asked papa for money for your expedition, Adèle? Be sure that you take enough. It would be dreadful indeed, were you to want money in Paris!"

"Fear not! I shall not want money," replied Adèle, shrinking as she ever did, from all allusion to her step-father's unrighteous hoards. But Sabina was not to be so satisfied; and with a movement of that filial fondness which ever seemed ready to shew itself,

she said, “ Dearest papa!—I understand you, Adèle. You mean that he pressed upon you more than you thought necessary—that is so like him,—but he is quite right. I hope you did not make any difficulties about it, Adèle; but that you took whatever he thought necessary ?”

The dissimulation which such sallies as this required was the hardest task of poor Adèle’s daily life, and would often have been beyond her power to perform, had she not for ever kept in mind the object for which she had already done and endured so much. “ Shall I spoil all to save myself one struggle more ?” thought she ; and then replied in an accent as foreign from her feelings as it was possible for her to assume, “ There was no need to trouble papa about it at all, my dear : I have more—much more than I shall require for the journey ; and when I get to Paris, my aunt will go with me to our good friend, M. de Servac, who, you know, manages all her money matters, as well as mine ; and then I shall not only be able to get whatever money I want,

but shall have the advantage of being able to arrange with him the manner in which I am to receive my income in future."

"Will there be no danger in this?—no danger of discovery to papa?" demanded Sabina.

"Not as I shall manage it, my love," returned her sister. "I shall only request him to pay in the money to my account at Lafitte's; and by means of any banker we may choose to fix upon at Strasburg, Francfort, or any where else, I can draw for it."

Sabina sighed. She felt, with that sort of indescribable certainty which seems more like instinct than reason, that Adèle did not lean upon her father as she used to do. In short, it is pretty nearly a moral impossibility for a very honest heart to go on for ever feigning, and for ever with success; and had not this sudden interruption of their daily intercourse arisen, it may be, that, despite all the painfully sustained acting of Mademoiselle de Cordillac, some suspicion that she did not wholly approve her loyal step-father's noble conduct, might

have crept in to sully the perfect love which had hitherto united the sisters.

As it was, however, all was still right between them ; for ever as the thought of Adèle's increased independence suggested itself, Sabina remembered gratefully how successfully the newly awakened power had been employed in her dear father's service, and she blessed the change which half a moment before had cost her a heavy sigh. A good portion of that night was spent in talking, and the theme was Adèle's journey and all the possible results that might follow from it ; there was no danger that any difference of feeling should arise between them : and when at last they agreed for health's sake they would talk no more, the kiss given and returned was as full of unmixed and unchanged love, as if Adèle had not known that their thoughts were no longer in common, and as if Sabina had not guessed it.

This was remembered afterwards by both of them with thankfulness.

* * * * *

At an early hour on the following morning, Adèle, once more dressed in the garments of her maid Susanne, and carrying a small bundle in her hand, sallied forth from her strangely acquired home upon a business still more strangely belonging to her. This *sortie* from one of the Grand Ducal residences of Baden by a descendant of maréchals, constables, and Heaven knows how many generals — the heroes, through successive generations, of the *oriflamme* and the lily — was one of those freaks of fortune which converts some scenes of human life into more whimsical melodrama than any dramatic romancer ever invented. Some thought of this kind seemed to pass through the mind of Adèle de Cordillac as she passed out; for a stifled sigh, a melancholy smile, and an unexplained shake of the head, which seemed as pregnant with meaning as that of my Lord Burleigh, shewed her mind to be full of matter. But to Sabina she spoke cheeringly, declaring that the object of her expedition rendered it impossible that she could be conscious either of fatigue or incon-

venience; and that if the success which she confidently hoped for, rewarded her efforts, she should ever consider this pilgrimage as the proudest boast of her life.

Sabina knew her too well not to feel that this was no vain bravado; and the words produced exactly the effect which the speaker intended,—they withdrew the poor girl's attention from the miserable circumstances of their present parting, and made her feel not only the necessity for it, but the happiness which would reward the enterprise should it prove successful.

“But, dearest Adèle,” she said, “you will not set off without seeing papa? I am afraid he is seriously unwell by his not getting up for breakfast on such a day as this; and to say the truth, dearest, I thought you would have proposed going to speak to him!”

Perhaps, of all the many miseries which had fallen upon Adèle de Cordillac, the continual necessity of not only concealing what she did feel, but of feigning what she did not, was that which she felt the most bitterly. A

truer heart never beat in human breast; a temper of more noble, fearless honesty was never bestowed by nature, than her own; and yet, circumstances so forced her to be a hypocrite, that she scarcely dared to speak without cautiously preparing herself to utter falsehoods.

Sabina's peace, Sabina's existence, seemed to hang upon the success of her dissimulation; and in most cases the thought of this had kept her so steady to her object, that it was very rarely she lost sight of it, even for an instant. Yet still there were some things which she felt she could not do; and the taking an affectionate leave of Mr. Hargrave on the present occasion was one of them. The manner in which he had betrayed on the previous evening — the deliberate wish that his old and faithful servant should be left a victim to his heroic fidelity, in the hope of sheltering his own guilt, had gone farther to make her shudder at the sound of his voice, and turn with abhorrence from encountering his eye, than all which had preceded it. It was for this reason that she had roused Sabina at an earlier hour

than was needful, in the hope that her dreaded step-father would take advantage of so obvious an excuse for avoiding a meeting not likely to be much more agreeable to him than to herself. Nor was she disappointed in this: but once again she was driven to have recourse to the equivocation she hated, in order to escape the importunity of her sister, and forced herself to reply that she would not take leave of Mr. Hargrave; because she felt that it would be unwise to do or say any thing which might excite her feelings in any way.

Sabina said no more. She saw there was agitation and suffering in the manner of her sister; and though thinking that a few words from her dear father could do nothing but good, she urged it no farther.

The moment of parting between the two girls was one of great agony on both sides. Sabina felt as if all the terror for Adèle's safety during the long and dreary journey which lay before her, had never come upon her heart till that moment; and she strained her to her bosom, as if such restraint could alone ensure

her safety : while poor Adèle herself felt as if, indeed, those dear arms removed, there would be nothing left to shield her from the world of exposure and desolation into which she was about to plunge.

Mr. Hargrave had made Sabina promise to tell Adèle that no letter must be ventured upon from Gernsbach to Paris, lest their retreat might be traced by means of it ; but Adèle, on her part, promised to write under cover to Frau Weiber, without signature, without date, and with no names mentioned which could throw any light on the correspondence, if examined at every post-office between them.

And thus they parted, in tears and in terror, and only supported by the feeling that it was a great and sacred duty which separated them.

* * * *

It happened on this occasion, as it has often happened before, that no misadventure of any kind occurred to justify the dread which the idea of this solitary expedition had occasioned. Adèle quietly mounted the diligence which was to convey her from Baden to

Strasbourg, in which her only companions were a French pastry-cook and his wife, who had been visiting Baden for the purpose of reconnoitring its eligibilities as a place for carrying on their trade on a more extended scale than they had been able to attain at Strasbourg ; and so completely engrossed were they by their own projects, that if all the beautiful young ladies in the world had successively appeared before them in the disguise of *soubrettes*, they would neither of them have been capable of bestowing a thought upon them, or their mysteries.

At Strasbourg the poor pilgrim's inquiries at the coach-office enabled her to perceive that her purse was sufficiently well stored to permit her securing the *coupé* to herself, which she did on the plea of being very ill, and requiring to lay her feet on the seat of the carriage. Having done this, she retreated to a quiet little bed-room at the inn from which the diligence was to start ; and again pleading illness as the cause of her retreat, obtained from a sympathising *fille de l'auberge* a *bouillon*

instead of a dinner, and a cup of coffee by way of supper,—a scheme which not only saved her from what she most dreaded, the stare of idle curiosity, but gave her more opportunity than she had yet had for deliberately reviewing the business before her, strengthening her mind for the scenes she had to go through, and arranging in detail the steps it would be necessary for her to take on arriving in Paris.

Political economists tell us that supply always follows demand, and moralists may very safely assert the same law respecting the calls which the pressure of circumstances makes upon the powers of the mind. An absolute dearth must in either case render the law of none effect; but where dearth is not, the human intellect will be found in a wonderful degree to answer the demands made upon it. Adèle de Cordillac, alone in her little chamber at Strasbourg, felt that she had undertaken a task which could neither be ill executed nor abandoned without the dereliction of a duty which her heart and conscience recognised as imperative. This conviction, de-

liberately reviewed and firmly established, left no room for weakness or vacillation ; and the young, forlorn, and unprotected girl felt perfectly capable of performing her bold and righteous purpose.

Notwithstanding the strangely complicated tissue of misfortunes which had lately seemed to wrap her more and more closely round and round, as in a fatal web that separated her from all the bright and happy circumstances of her former life, — notwithstanding this seemingly persevering hostility of fortune, Adèle had no cause to complain of ill-luck on the journey, for never was an equal distance traversed with less of event or adventure of any sort ; and on the evening of the next day but one after leaving Baden, she found herself, almost to her own astonishment, unscathed in limb, and rather strengthened than impaired in spirit, before the entrance door of her aunt's elegant little apartment *au troisième étage* in the Rue de Rivoli.

Her most anxious thought as she rung the bell was concerning the chances for and

against her being known by the servant who should answer it; but here again fortune favoured her, for the man who opened the door was a perfect stranger to her.

Notwithstanding the beauty of the pale face that appeared under Susanne's cap, and the little straw bonnet worn over it, the Parisian footman of Madame de Hautrivate accorded her no very respectful greeting. “*Que voulez-vous, ma fille?*” were the words which welcomed her. Far, however, from repining at this want of respect, Adèle felt inexpressibly relieved at not encountering the astonished stare of an old acquaintance; and replied to the question by desiring that Madame de Hautrivate might be told “*Mademoiselle Adèle*” desired to speak to her.

As this was precisely the style and title of those important personages who act as accredited ambassadors between the important *modiste* and her deeply-interested customers, Mademoiselle de Cordillac justly thought that she could adopt none so likely to ensure her speedy admittance, as no individual holding service

under Madame de Hautrivate would be likely to dismiss any one coming in “such a questionable shape.” Could she have provided herself with a wicker-basket lined with oil-skin, she would have felt assured that no woman in Paris would have denied her right of *entrée*; but as she could not do this, she did what was next best to it, and her excellent tact and judgment were rewarded by being told that Madame would see her directly.

In fact, the interval she had to pass in the ante-room was a very short one; for her aunt’s *femme de chambre* immediately appeared, uttering the careless “*Entrez, mademoiselle,*” usual on such occasions, without condescending to look sufficiently at the humble individual she addressed to discover the well-known features of Mademoiselle de Cordillac.

For half a moment, the glance of Madame de Hautrivate at the supposed milliner was equally careless and undiscerning; but then she caught a look from the matchless eyes of the pale and overworn Adèle, which caused her to exclaim in considerable agitation, “*Eh!*

mais, mon Dieu, donc ! qu'est que cela veut dire ? Non ! ce n'est pas possible !—Mais oui !—Grand Dieu ! c'est toi, ma niece ?”

Poor Adèle seated herself before she attempted to reply, and truly it was quite time she should do so ; for the struggle to preserve such a quiet and composed aspect as might ensure her passing unnoticed, while her anxious and harassed spirits were as far as well could be from the condition she laboured to assume, had lasted long enough ; and the power of sitting down and crying heartily, without incurring any particular danger thereby, was a great comfort.

But the perceiving that her niece was incapable of returning any answers was no reason, in the opinion of Madame de Hautri-vage, for not persevering in her questions ; and accordingly, while Adèle went on weeping, her aunt went on interrogating, with a vehemence of curiosity which soon broke through all reserve, leading her to inquire, without even a shadow of caution, “ How they had been received by the royal family of

England ; whether Charles Dix had testified all the gratitude they had a right to expect ; and whether it was really true that the ladies in London wore such very ridiculously large *collerettes* as they were reported to do ? ”

Whether Adèle’s persevering indulgence in the comfort of weeping would have lasted so long had the theme of her aunt’s questionings been less elegant and more alarming, may be doubted. But as it was, she did not stint ; and was by no means insensible to the womanly gentleness with which her old acquaintance, the *femme de chambre*, stood silently beside her, with a large *flacon* of very refreshing *eau de Cologne* ; so that the first few minutes of her dreaded interview with Madame de Hautrivate passed away in as desirable a manner, all things considered, as could have been hoped for. But Adèle had a conscience ; and though it is very probable she would have preferred continuing her tearful silence a while longer, she yielded not to the temptation, but, the few minutes over, prepared to answer all the questions put to

her in as satisfactory a manner as it was in her power to do, without absolutely defeating the purpose for which she had already made such tremendous sacrifices.

Of the Court of St. James's, or of Windsor Castle, she modestly confessed she knew not enough to describe either with confidence. Of Charles Dix, she said, they had received no very recent news; and of the ladies' *collerettes*, she owned she knew but little, having been more occupied in comparing notes with her sister on their great and sudden change, than in making any on the various novel objects by which they had found themselves surrounded. And then, having completely convinced her aunt that there never had been so stupid a traveller, or one so utterly incapable of profiting by what she saw, Adèle was permitted to seek the repose she asked for, on the neat little couch of the amiable *soubrette*: the striking elegance of Madame's *joli logement* being chiefly confined to what met the eye, or, at any rate, not extending to a guest-chamber. While making a thou-

sand apologies, however, for the *malheur* of a Cordillac's being obliged to lay down on the bed of Mademoiselle Josephine, she promised that a more fitting couch should be *loué* before night, and placed for her accommodation in a little cabinet which occasionally served her as a *boudoir*.

The agitation, embarrassment, and difficulties of all kinds which, of necessity, she had to encounter, both during her journey and immediately at the conclusion of it, being thus well over, Adèle enjoyed an hour or two of sound and restoring sleep, and when she awoke from it, felt herself able to prosecute her task without fearing that either her strength or courage would fail her.

Madame de Hautrivate, as a matter of course, was engaged to pass the *soirée* in society; but she took a cup of coffee with her niece before she set out, and, in the course of their conversation during the time thus occupied, learned from her that one part of the business which brought her to Paris was the new arrangement which their change of

circumstances rendered necessary respecting the manner in which she should wish for the future to receive her income.

This, though true, was, as we well know, merely incidental ; for poor Adèle would for years have dispensed with the necessity of receiving any money at all rather than have set out upon the journey she had achieved ; but it served excellently well as a reason, in the estimation of Madame de Hautrivaige, for all she had done, and enabled her niece to pass very lightly over the "*other things*" which made it absolutely necessary that she should return to Paris for a few days.

Adèle de Cordillac nourished no hope that her real business could be got through without publicity ; but even while she felt this to be impossible, her anxiety to keep her aunt as long ignorant of it as might be, was very great, and she omitted nothing that could aid her in attaining this very desirable object. After some little difficulty, she at length convinced the good lady that she was in earnest in declaring that she did not in-

tend to see any of her relations, friends, or acquaintance, during her short stay,—a statement which appeared utterly incredible, till she stated the fact of her having no dresses whatever, nor, for the present, any money to buy them. A proper garb in which to go out for the purpose of executing the business she had to do, she said that Josephine should procure for her, but beyond this she should purchase nothing; and this statement, so made as to ensure belief, effectually stopped any further attempt to convince the poor shipwrecked Adèle that it would be advisable to renew all her brilliant associations, and blaze again in the *salons* of Paris as fairest of the fair. So ably, indeed, did she contrive to bring before her aunt the tremendous danger of being seen in a *toilette absolument honteuse*, if any of her acquaintance were let into the secret of her arrival, that Madame de Hautrivaige left her, not only with a promise of keeping her being in Paris unknown to all the world, but with

a wish of doing so hardly less strong than her own.

Fortunately for Adèle, her aunt's first engagement for the evening was joining a party at the Grand Opera, which took her off early enough to leave her an hour or two of very valuable time. Her first use of it was to despatch a note by the porter to an estimable old friend, who, besides having known her from infancy, had the advantage of being an *avocat* in great practice. She knew the *manière d'être* of this gentleman well enough to be pretty certain as to where her summons would be likely to find him: nor did this confidence deceive her; M. de Servac came to her in even less time than she had dared to calculate as the least possible.

Highly as she esteemed, and perfectly as she was willing to trust him on the agitating and painful business which concerned herself, she had, however, no intention of betraying either the residence of Mr. Hargrave or any thing which she still hoped might remain in

mystery, concerning the cause of his leaving Paris ; nor were the cross-questionings of her old friend in any way embarrassing. M. de Servac, in common with the majority of Mr. Hargrave's acquaintance, had received the history of his having been discovered in a plot against the government without in the least degree doubting its truth, and being himself a stanch supporter of the existing government, a feeling of honour would have prevented his seeking any information on the subject from Adèle, even if he had been urged thereto by a much stronger impulse of curiosity than he really felt. As to any grave fear that the plottings of an Englishman of such gay and graceful notoriety as Mr. Hargrave could affect the stability of the reigning dynasty, he felt it not ; and was, therefore, very easily led from a subject which he was rather inclined to treat as a jest, to one in which it was speedily evident to him that his admired young friend was most seriously and painfully interested.

“ This is, indeed, a most distressing busi-

ness for you, *ma chère enfant*," said he, knitting his brows, and looking very grave. " I have heard this old man's guilt spoken of in the profession as a matter of absolute certainty. Are you, indeed, sufficiently convinced of his innocence to justify your coming thus publicly forward to assert it?"

" I am, M. de Servac!" replied Adèle, with an earnestness and almost solemnity of tone that gave great force to her words. " You have known me long enough, and, as I think, well enough, to believe that I would not, on light or insufficient grounds, have thus come forward, and undertaken to do what you may well guess must be so painful to me."

" You say truly, Mademoiselle de Cordillac," replied the old gentleman. " I ought not—I cannot doubt your deep persuasion of his innocence. But in the eyes of the court, my young friend, this will not be enough. You must be prepared to prove his innocence as well as believe in it. Do you come with power to do this?"

" I hope and believe that I do," she replied.

And then, blushing to her very temples, she added, “ But it cannot be done without my avowing what, were my own fate alone concerned, I think I would rather die than divulge. But I do not hesitate,—nothing shall or can make me hesitate as to the task that lies before me! If what I have to divulge impugns my good name while it exonerates his, I ought only to rejoice and be thankful that the power is still left me to do so much justice.”

“ I am sorry to hear that any such sacrifice is necessary,” replied M. de Servac, gravely; “ nor would I have believed, on any worse authority, that your mother’s daughter, Mademoiselle de Cordillac, could have any such disclosure to make.”

“ The agony it gives me to avow what I have done,” said poor Adèle, vainly endeavouring not to weep, “ convinces me that an act which, a few short weeks ago, I thought not only innocent, but just and righteous, must in itself have been far otherwise, or

I could not thus tremble at the thought of revealing it."

"Proceed—proceed, young lady," said the *avocat*, again knitting his brows, with an air of severity. "If it be your purpose to communicate the circumstances you speak of to me, you can gain nothing by delay or circumlocution."

"True, sir, true," returned Adèle, rather strengthened than shaken by this harshness. "I have no wish to delay the communication. Madame Bertrand has, I believe, herself stated that the robbery committed on her person, on the night when she was violently carried off from Mr. Hargrave's house, was perpetrated between the hours of four and five?" said Mademoiselle de Cordillac, with recovered composure.

"So I understand," returned the lawyer. "But may I ask you," he continued, "why it is that you name with so much ceremony the gentleman whom you have always been accustomed to call your father?"

"Because to my feelings this business is a very solemn one, and I would wish to express myself less with familiarity than correctness," she replied, colouring slightly; and then continuing her statement with steady composure: "I am ready to depose on oath, M. de Servac, that one quarter of an hour before four o'clock on that unfortunate night, or rather morning, I myself despatched Roger Humphries on a message, from which I know that he could not have returned till after five. Will not this evidence be sufficient to prove his innocence,—to prove an *alibi*, as I believe it is called?"

"It would be evidence towards constituting such proof, but could not, I fear, suffice if entirely unsupported. It would prove most satisfactorily that *you* had sent him, Mademoiselle, but not that he went on your errand. How know you that he did not take advantage of your sending him from the house, in order to commit, or assist in, the robbery of which he stands accused?"

"I know it to be impossible," replied Adèle,

“ from my long acquaintance with the man ; but I can, of course, understand that this is not an argument to be listened to by his judges. We must, therefore, seek for what may prove more convincing. Since I heard of this terrible arrest, I have had no means of inquiring ; but I feel no doubt that the servants of the hôtel in the Rue de Rivoli will be able to prove his having been there within the time I have mentioned.”

“ In that case I think the *alibi* would be established ; for the distance could not have been traversed twice by an old man within the time specified, leaving sufficient interval for the spoliation and abduction, as sworn to, of Madame Bertrand ; and, of course, if you intrust the commission to me, I will take care to gather all the information to be collected at the hôtel you mention. But there is one point which you seem to overlook, *chère Mademoiselle Adèle*, which, I confess, leaves me with very little hope of our obtaining the evidence you expect. The prisoner has never attempted to prove an *alibi*.”

“ I know it, sir,—I know it!” said Adèle, her steady composure of manner again giving way before the feelings this observation aroused. “ I know from the newspapers that the old man has preserved, throughout every examination to which he has been exposed, a silence invincible, either by threats or arguments; and it is this which has brought me hither to say for him what his fidelity to me has prevented his saying for himself. Roger Humphries could not have stated his having been at the hôtel without stating also who sent him there, and to whom the message he carried was addressed; at least I cannot but suppose that such questions would have been asked, and that his refusal to answer them would have invalidated any statement he could have made.”

“ Most unquestionably it would,” replied M. de Servac. “ But may I ask you what possible reason could prevent his replying to questions at once so obvious and so necessary? I really cannot imagine any rational motive strong enough to induce a man, in the very

ticklish situation of this Roger Humphries, to refuse giving such information as you speak of; his fate entirely depending upon it, as it certainly would do, if he could prove thereby that he really went upon the expedition you mention."

"His motive, M. de Servac," said Adèle, blushing very painfully, "would have been to preserve from exposure and injurious suspicion the name of one who is determined to prove herself not wholly unworthy his generous fidelity. The letter which I commissioned him to carry to the Hôtel — was addressed by me to Mr. Alfred Coventry, a young Englishman, well known in the fashionable circles of Paris."

"If you do not deceive yourself,—if this old servant has really maintained the silence which has so strongly confirmed every suspicion against him from the motive you assign, he does indeed deserve all you can do, and every sacrifice you can make, for him. And gladly, Mademoiselle Adèle, should I set about any inquiries which might be likely to

end in doing justice to one who so richly deserves it. And yet I shall be sorry, too, to be the means——” and here the worthy lawyer stopped short, took out his snuff-box, and inhaled an enormous quantity of snuff.

“ To be the means of exposing me, you would say,” rejoined Adèle, with a melancholy smile. “ But if you please, my dear sir, we must neither of us at this moment bestow a thought on a subject of so very little comparative importance. Succeed in proving the *alibi* of Roger Humphries when this crime was committed, and I will bless you to the last hour I have to live, even if you were to find my unfortunate letter in your researches, and read it aloud in open court.”

“ I think, then,” said the old advocate, rising, and kissing her hand as he bowed his farewell,—“ I think, Mademoiselle Adèle, that you can go no farther in giving me instructions as to sparing *nothing* to obtain success; and I shall certainly obey you with the less scruple, because I cannot for the life of me help doubting your having ever done any

thing that could really disgrace the noble name you bear."

Poor Adèle gently pressed the venerable hand which still held hers, and uttered a fervent "God bless you!"—a word and an act that was very rightly interpreted by the long-esteemed friend of her family. The good man then left her, very greatly cheered and comforted by the interview.

CHAPTER VII.

WHEN Adèle on the following morning met her aunt at breakfast, she made no secret of having sought and obtained an interview with M. de Servac on the preceding evening. It would by no means have suited, indeed, with her plan of operations to have enlightened Madame de Hautrivaige upon the nature of the business she had intrusted to their old legal friend, and she deemed it not a sin to leave her in the persuasion (of her own spontaneous adoption, however) that the interview had related wholly to her financial affairs.

There had been no difficulty in making M. de Servac understand that it would be better for the interest of all parties, as well as for her own tranquillity, that *Madame la*

tante should not be made acquainted with what was going on,—a pretty long knowledge of her character enabling him to guess what sort of assistance they should be likely to derive from her co-operation.

Whatever the worthy lawyer might have thought of the business when his young client first stated to him her part in it, he had become cordially interested in it before he left her, and lost no time in making personal requisitions at the hôtel to which he was referred in the Rue de Rivoli, in order to discover what sort of a case he had to manage.

The three first gentlemen in the napkin, boot-jack, and scout line, who submitted themselves to his interrogatories, could afford him no information whatever; and the kind-hearted old gentleman began to fear that poor Adèle's firm and noble confidence in her old servant's honour and honesty was altogether ill-placed and fallacious.

He was not, however, one to be easily turned aside from any quest in which he was engaged, and his perseverance was in this

instance rewarded by finding, in a manner the most full and satisfactory, the information he sought. He was indebted to his pertinacity for this success, in more ways than one; for not only was it by dint of reiterated inquiries that he obtained that for which he was seeking, but the resolute style in which he continued on the premises long after the *chef* of the waiters had assured him with a shrug, that at the hour he mentioned it was *absolument impossible* that any person belonging to the establishment could have been stirring, attracted the attention of the humble individual whose chief occupation was pumping water in a back-court for the use of waiters, chambermaids, horse-boys, or whoever else belonging to the Hôtel — might chance to desire a bucket-full of that commodity.

“On what day was it?” demanded the water-pumper, stepping forward during a moment of rare leisure, which he employed doubly, by asking the above question, and at the same time very ingeniously repairing

the broken button-hole of his over-fatigued braces.

M. de Servac answered the question with the most accurate exactness.

“*Ah ça, that was the day, was it?*” said the pumper. “But now you must tell me what it was that happened on that day, or how shall I be able to give you any information about it?”

Though there was no very clear evidence on the face of this demand that its being complied with would produce the information desired, M. de Servac scrupled not to do it, and that too with as much fulness and precision as if he were answering the Procureur du Roi.

“*Mais oui, mais oui,—oui, oui, oui, vous dis-je,*” he exclaimed in return. “I remember the old fellow,” he continued, “as well as if he was my father—a tall, lanky, long-legged monsieur, wrapped up in a *redingote* as if he was packed up for Africa. It was I, monsieur,—I myself, who told him that the *milor* he inquired for was set off with four horses as

fast as they could gallop, just about ten minutes before he made his appearance; and if my word is not enough for you, any more than it was for him, why I will—for love and a *petit pour-boire*,—call out Desiré for you, as I did for him, when he did not seem willing to believe the news I told him."

The *petit pour-boire* was not long in making its appearance, and as its amount was exceedingly satisfactory to the pumper, he ventured to disregard the begging buckets of two chambermaids stationed on either side the pump, while he galloped off in search of an individual who, like himself, had witnessed the despair of the unfortunate Roger on hearing that Mr. Coventry was gone. This person was a respectable-looking man, who was employed as book-keeper, and who, being up for the purpose of seeing Mr. Coventry off, perfectly well remembered the old man's coming to inquire for him, as well as the very great disappointment he seemed to suffer on learning that he had set off before his arrival.

"Is your recollection of this old man such

as would enable you to swear to his person?" demanded M. de Servac.

"Yes," was the reply; "I think I could safely swear to him."

"I am exceedingly glad to hear it," returned the lawyer; "and I must beg that you will hold yourself in readiness to attend the trial of this poor fellow, who may be saved from the galleys by your testimony: for it is perfectly clear that if he was here at the hour I have named, he could not possibly have been guilty of the crime of which he stands accused."

"I certainly remember the old man who came hither to inquire for Mr. Coventry the morning that he left Paris," said Desiré, "and cannot think that I should feel any scruple about identifying his person upon oath. But if there is any doubt upon the subject, I can refer you, monsieur, to a young man who I know to be still in Paris, and who was jeering the poor old fellow for not having walked a trifle faster, which might have brought him in time. This young man, whose name is

Oliff, is servant to the Count Romanhoff, and was here with his master, who came to take leave of Mr. Coventry, but instead of that, set off with him, leaving his servant to follow,—a fancy which seemed to astonish Monsieur Oliff extremely, and he was still here chattering to me about it when the old man you inquire about, arrived."

Though exceedingly well satisfied with the evidence thus acquired, M. de Servac had no sort of objection to strengthen it; and having taken the address to Count Romanhoff's lodgings, repaired thither with all speed, and had again the good fortune to find a witness ready to swear to the person of an old man, wearing a livery great-coat, who came to the Hôtel — on the day, and at the hour named, to inquire for Mr. Coventry.

M. de Servac, on receiving from the Sieur Oliff this welcome intelligence, gave him to understand that he would be required, in the course of the following week or ten days, to give this evidence in court.

"Willingly, sir," replied Oliff, "if my

master, the Count Romanhoff, has no objection."

"Objection! What objection can he possibly have, my good friend, to your obeying the summons of a court of law?" said the lawyer.

"None whatever, I dare say, sir," returned the punctilious valet; "but I would wish to have him made acquainted with the business."

"Can I see him?" demanded the persevering M. de Servac.

"I cannot doubt it, sir," said the observant Russe. "But if you will give me leave, I will inquire."

He did so, and immediately returned with his master's request that the gentleman would be pleased to walk in.

Count Romanhoff received him with politeness; but when he proceeded to explain his business, and to speak of his anxiety to procure witnesses who might be able to identify an old servant of Mr. Hargrave's, in order to save him, by proving an *alibi*, from being condemned to the galleys for a crime of which

there was every reason to believe him innocent, his manner, which had been that of perfectly civil indifference, suddenly changed to great animation and the most lively interest.

"Is it possible," he exclaimed, — "is it possible that the atrocious old man, of whose contumacious insolence to the court, all Paris is talking,—is it possible that he should be innocent?"

"I firmly believe, Count," returned M. de Servac, "that this atrocious old man, as you call him, will turn out to be one of the most noble-minded and faithful servants on record ; and I cannot doubt, therefore, that you will willingly permit your servant to attend the trial. It is true that I have other evidence, but in such cases it is scarcely possible to have too much."

"Evidence of what, sir?" demanded the Count, with his usual eagerness. "My servant is entirely at your orders : but have the kindness to tell me what is the point which his testimony is intended to prove?"

" His testimony, Count Romanhoff, is asked for to prove that a certain old man——"

At this moment an inner door of the apartment opened, and Alfred Coventry entered the room, not, however, with the air of a visitor, but of an inmate.

" I interrupt you, Count," he said, perceiving a stranger, and also that his friend was listening very eagerly to the words which ceased as he entered.

" Pray come in, Coventry; this business will interest you as much as it does me. This gentleman, sir," turning to M. de Servac, " was intimate in the family of M. Hargrave, and will therefore, as well as myself, be grateful to you for any information respecting the trial of his servant. Alfred, this gentleman—M. de Servac, if I heard the name aright,—is here to ask for the testimony of Oliff, in order to prove the innocence of the man about to be tried for the Bertrand robbery."

" Alfred Coventry!" said the lawyer, repeating the name with an air of singular satis-

faction. “ If you are M. Alfred Coventry, this meeting is a singularly lucky one. Of all men living, sir, you are the most bound to interest yourself in this matter; for I have every reason to believe that you have been the involuntary cause of bringing a very honest man into jeopardy. Permit me to ask you, if you left the Hôtel —, in the Rue de Rivoli, rather before five o’clock on the morning of the 24th April ? ”

“ I did, sir,” replied Coventry; “ and may I in return request to know your reason for making the inquiry ? ”

“ Were it not quite certain, M. Coventry, that the whole of this business must of necessity be explained at full length in a few days, and that in the most public manner possible,—namely, in open court,—I might, from delicacy to a very admirable young lady, so frame my answer as to leave you still in the dark: but as this caution would be perfectly useless, as, most unhappily, nothing can be done for my poor client without exposing, very painfully, the little indiscretion of my

charming young friend, Mademoiselle de Cordillac —”

“ *Ecoutez donc!*” cried the well-pleased Romanhoff, who had of late been a good deal troubled by symptoms of lingering attachment in the heart of his friend, and by finding his history of the *fiacre* treated as a blundering romance,—“ *Ecoutez donc, mon cher.* Forgive this interruption, M. de Servac,” he continued; “ but I wish my friend to hear this, and his thoughts seemed to be wandering.”

“ The young gentleman, on the contrary, appears to be listening very attentively,” returned the lawyer; “ and I cannot but say that it would be strange if he did not, seeing the part he has in the affair. My motive, M. Alfred Coventry, for wishing to know if you left Paris at the hour I have mentioned on the morning of the 24th ultimo, is, that your testimony may confirm that of others in proving the correctness of the statement I have received from Mademoiselle de Cordillac, on which statement the fate of my client, Roger Humphries, appears to depend.”

"As you have volunteered a promise to be explicit, sir," said Coventry, "I presume that I may, without indiscretion, inquire how it happens that the name of the young lady you have mentioned and my own have been brought together?"

"I would not tell you, sir," replied M. de Servac, shaking his head with an air of much vexation, "if, by refusing to do so, I could keep you in ignorance of the facts, but, unhappily, this is impossible. I presume you have read in the papers all the proceedings that have taken place relative to the great diamond robbery, and are aware that suspicion, in most people's opinion amounting to proof, rests against this Roger Humphries, who, at the time of the robbery, was in the service of Mr. Hargrave?"

Mr. Coventry bowed his assent.

"And you are aware that one of the strongest circumstances against him is the obstinate silence which he has opposed to all the inquiries made as to where he had been, and how employed at the time he was arrested,

which was about six o'clock on the same morning?"

"Yes, sir, I have read the whole account of the examinations," said Coventry.

"Now then, sir, you shall judge of our *alibi*. Instead of being engaged in robbing Madame Bertrand of her diamonds, this poor old man was employed, precisely at the time this outrage was perpetrated, in conveying a letter from his young mistress, Mademoiselle Adèle de Cordillac, to you."

"To me, sir?" exclaimed the young man, changing colour. "If the safety of your client depends upon the establishment of this fact, I fear that there is little chance for him."

"Because you did not happen to receive the letter, young gentleman? I wish it were possible to save this brave fellow without being able to prove that it was sent. The disagreeable part of the business is our having to shew, before the eyes of all men, that this nobly born, and till now most irreproachable young lady, did actually despatch, at that mysterious and unwonted hour, a letter addressed to M.

Alfred Coventry, at the Hôtel —, Rue de Rivoli."

Coventry was greatly agitated; he got up and walked hastily towards the window without speaking.

"Then the old man has broken through his silence at last?" said Count Romanhoff; "and has, of course, told you, sir, as his advocate, all the facts of the case?"

"Indeed he has not, Count Romanhoff," returned M. de Servac; "nor have I any reason to suppose that the truth would ever have been known if Roger Humphries had been the only person privy to the secret. It is clear that this stout-hearted and faithful old fellow has made up his mind to endure all that the law can make him suffer, rather than betray the secret intrusted to him. But, luckily for him, the nature of the person he has so loyally served is as noble as his own. Mademoiselle de Cordillac has come to Paris, perfectly alone, her step-father having so involved himself in some political intrigue as to render his entering France impossible. This

beautiful young girl has taken this lonely journey, having before her eyes the exposure, which she evidently dreads worse than death, of the imprudence she has committed, for the holy and righteous object of saving the faithful servant whose silence was intended to save *her*. It is nobly done; and though I grieve that a daughter of so honourable a race should have been guilty of an indiscretion, the avowing it for such a motive, and despite such bitter suffering, is a glorious atonement; and so her family will think if they are worthy of *her*." The old gentleman blew his nose lustily as he concluded, and not without reason, for his eyes were full of tears, which might have betrayed more weakness than he would have wished to exhibit before his two gay young auditors, had he not managed to conceal them by this device.

But he wronged them—wronged them both if he fancied that they had listened to his statement unmoved. Coventry, indeed, gave no audible sign of what he felt; but Romanhoff started to his feet, exclaiming, "God

forgive me!— How cruelly have I wronged that lovely girl!— Noble, noble creature!— I see it—I understand it all. It is I who have been the cause of all her suffering. Bear with me, Coventry. Listen to me, I entreat you, in order that you may understand this matter as well as I do.”

The agitated Count laid his hand on the shoulder of Coventry as he spoke, and but for the expression of deep and sincere suffering which was legible on his features, it might have been difficult to obtain a patient hearing from his friend; for at that moment Mr. Coventry recollects, with more distinctness than was at all desirable, who it was who had exaggerated every seeming fault of the generous Adèle, and by whose influence he had been goaded to leave Paris in such desperate haste, when the delay of a few minutes only might have made him the happiest instead of being, as he now felt, the most miserable of men. He turned firmly round as the hand of Romanhoff touched his shoulder; but the sight of the altered countenance and working fea-

tures of his unlucky friend disarmed him, and, instead of uttering the rough words which were upon his lips, he bent his head upon his hands, and cried, “ Oh, Romanhoff! what have you done?”

“ I will tell you what I have done,” replied the young man, speaking with great rapidity; “ but it may be remedied. It is not too late yet, Alfred. Tell me, sir,” he added, suddenly turning towards M. de Servac, “ where is Mademoiselle de Cordillac to be found?”

“ She is at the residence of her aunt, Madame de Hautrivate,” replied the judicious old gentleman, choosing to give his fair client the advantage of the old lady’s protection in the eyes of the young men. “ But you will have little chance of seeing her there, young gentleman. Mademoiselle de Cordillac does not mean to see any one.”

“ *Pour cela——*” but the Count concluded the sentence thus begun with a slight cough. He scrupled not, however, notwithstanding the presence of the lawyer, to continue his explanation to his suffering friend.

" I perfectly understand all that has happened, Coventry. I went to that confounded ball, for the sole purpose of finding out what that girl was made of before I utterly condemned her. I well remember being at one moment inclined to think that I had wronged her when I fancied her indifferent to you. I well remember symptoms, in manner rather than in words, as I continued to talk of you, which made me suspect that the theme touched her nearly ; but then her tone seemed suddenly to change ; I thought she was trifling with me as well as with you ; and having watched her escape from the room, as if on purpose to get rid of me, I flew back to you with the determination of using all the influence my friendship for you gave me, in turning your thoughts for ever from one whom I conceived to be unworthy of you. I must have left the house between three and four. This old man reached your hôtel before five. Is it not plain that, though her delicacy shrunk from making me her confidant, she could not go to rest till she had explained

the conduct of which I had accused her, by writing to you? And well did she choose her messenger, poor lady! and well would his errand have sped had I not so urged you to instant departure. Coventry! can you forgive me?"

"At this moment, Count, I cannot easily forgive either of us," replied Coventry, actually trembling from excessive agitation; "but this is no time to settle which has been the most to blame." Then turning to M. de Servac, he said, "Believe me, sir, on the honour of a gentleman,—a pledge that I have never lightly given,—that my feelings in this matter are such as may safely be permitted to act, side by side, with your own. I have no strength, no power, at this moment, to explain myself further: but I implore you, by the interest you feel for—for your client, M. de Servac,—to give me immediately the means of seeing the old man. You, as his counsel, will surely be admitted to him; take me with you instantly—instantly; an hour—an instant of delay, may be of importance!"

M. de Servac looked at the young man with interest, surprise, and curiosity. The unmistakable sincerity of the emotions which shook his frame commanded attention, and justified the confidence which he felt disposed to place in him ; but a remnant of professional caution induced him to say, “ If M. Alfred Coventry would do me the honour to communicate to me the object of his visit to the prisoner, I should, professionally speaking, be more capable of judging of its utility.”

“ No man can judge of its utility but myself, sir,” replied Coventry, endeavouring to speak with calmness. “ If you doubt me — if you doubt my being worthy of a degree of trust so little likely to be dangerous, let the fact of my having been deemed worthy by Mademoiselle de Cordillac of receiving a written communication from her, plead for me. Besides, sir, I have no wish whatever to converse with the prisoner, excepting in your hearing.”

“ You have no need of any one to plead for you, M. Alfred,” returned the old man, smiling kindly on him. “ I did but speak as

lawyers always should speak, when the interest of a client is concerned, and that is cautiously. But come along, young gentleman. I am well inclined, I promise you, to bless the chance which has made you my *collaborateur* in this business. How shall we go? On foot, as I came here; or, for speed's sake, in a *fiacre*?"

"Will not my own carriage convey us more quickly?" said Coventry, laying his hand on the bell.

"It might, perhaps, if it were ready at the door; but even if it were there, I should advise,—professional again, you see,—that we should take the shelter of the *fiacre*. I don't love liveries. We never mount colours till the moment of action."

Little or no answer was returned to this, except what was conveyed by the act of seizing upon a hat, and running down the stairs with more rapidity than the old lawyer could imitate; but the now friendly pair were soon stepping hastily side by side towards a *place de fiacre*, and, without an instant of un-

necessary delay, found themselves seated in one of those matchless vehicles, which, despite the animated rivalry of London, beat the world in noise.

This, perhaps, might have been one reason for the profound silence of Coventry during their drive to the prison where old Roger was immured. He sat without uttering a word ; his cheeks flushed, his eyes closed, and his temples throbbing, as if a pair of fulling mills had been at work within them. Nor was his companion in any degree more conversable, though it is possible that this was, in his case, less a matter of inclination than necessity.

On reaching the place of their destination, they presented themselves before the proper authorities for the purpose of obtaining admission,—a privilege immediately granted upon M. de Servac's giving his name, and declaring himself counsel for the prisoner, Roger Humphries.

A turnkey preceded them to the cell of the poor old man, which, on being opened for their reception, presented to his wondering

eyes the persons of two perfect strangers. He looked up and quietly examined the faces of both, but perceiving that he knew neither, dropped his eyes again upon a small book that he held in his hand.

“How long does Monsieur desire to be left with the prisoner?” demanded the turnkey, addressing M. de Servac.

“Five minutes, my friend,” replied the lawyer; adding in a whisper, as the man bowed and prepared to close the door, “But my assistant here will require to be left longer. My time is precious,—so take care to return at the end of five minutes precisely.”

While this passed, Coventry addressed the old man in a voice of extreme emotion, “You are the servant of Mademoiselle de Cordillac—of Mr. Hargrave, I mean? Do you know me?—do you remember me?”

“No, sir,” replied Roger. “I may have seen you before; but I do not know your name.”

“One moment, my young friend,—one

moment," said M. de Servac, laying his hand upon that of Coventry. " Does this old man understand our language? if not, you must serve me as an interpreter."

" I can both understand and speak it," said Roger in French.

" That is well, my man, we shall get on all the better. I have allowed myself but five minutes, and must therefore waste no time; so listen attentively, my good friend, to what I say, and if you do not fully understand me ask this gentleman to help you. But, first let me ask you, do you know who this gentleman is?"

" No, sir, I do not. I have some thought that I have seen him before,—most likely among company at my master's house; but if I ever heard his name, I have forgotten it."

" Cannot you recollect having heard the name of Alfred Coventry,—Monsieur Alfred Coventry?"

Roger started a little, a very little; but only shook his head in reply, and applied himself

again very assiduously to the perusal of his book.

The lawyer spent at the very least one of his five minutes in studying the harsh, rigid features of the old man whose defence he had undertaken ; and felt that if accident had not befriended him, in throwing a little light upon the matter, he should have had tough work to get out of him any fact which it was his will and pleasure to conceal.

“ My five minutes must be nearly gone,” said M. de Servac, having caught a furtive glance thrown by the prisoner upon his companion ; “ and I shall leave you to make acquaintance with this young gentleman—who is your countryman you know—as fast as you can ; first telling you, however, that I have been engaged to plead in your defence at your approaching trial, by your good friend, Mademoiselle Adèle de Cordillac, and that this gentleman is M. Alfred Coventry : and there comes our turnkey,—there goes his key into the lock,—make the best use of your time both of you, and make my work next week as

easy as you can, by treating each other as friends and countrymen ought to do,—that is, with perfect confidence.”

The door opened as he concluded these words, and the turnkey entered.

“How long will it be necessary for this young man to remain with the prisoner?” demanded the official. “He must name the time, and be ready to keep it too when I come back for him.”

“A moment—a single moment will suffice!” cried Coventry, impetuously.

“Say ten minutes, if you please,” returned the lawyer, in a voice of authority. “What I have left for you to do will not take less. *Allons, donc!* I am ready to go,” he added, addressing the man of locks, “and come back to let out my companion in about a quarter of an hour.”

“That is longer than necessary!” interposed Coventry. “For mercy’s sake do not keep me here!”

The official gave him a grim smile. “If your business is to lie in the correctional line,”

said he, “you must learn to look less frightened at the sight of a cell. But never fear, young sir, I’ll fetch you out again before you can take any harm.” He then motioned to M. de Servac to pass on, and the door was again closed, leaving Roger Humphries and Alfred Coventry *tête-à-tête*.

CHAPTER VIII.

“ Is it true, Roger Humphries,—is it true that Mademoiselle de Cordillac intrusted you with a letter for me on the night of Mr. Hargrave’s ball, between the 23d and 24th of April ? ” said Coventry, seizing on the old man’s hand, and grasping it strongly.

“ Is it true, sir, that you are Mr. Alfred Coventry ? ” returned Roger, answering one very cogent question by another.

Coventry thrust his hands into his pockets, and pulled forth two or three letters bearing his address, “ Will not these satisfy you ? ” said he.

“ These and your looks together, sir, do satisfy me,” replied the old man ; “ and come what will, I humbly thank God for granting

me an opportunity of doing my errand before I die."

Then carefully untying his neck-cloth, he laid it across his knees, and deliberately un-twisted fold after fold till he arrived at the little letter of poor Adèle carefully enveloped in a bit of soft paper, and very little worse for the wear.

"There!" said Roger, taking it gingerly between his fore-finger and thumb, and yielding it to the eager grasp of Coventry. "There it is, sir; where those others went it can't be wrong to let this go too. And I won't say but I'm glad to get quit of it, for the job has been a troublesome one altogether, and that I can't deny."

Did Alfred Coventry listen to this; or was he engaged in reading the words that he held before his dim and dazzled eyes?

"If Mr. Coventry will let me see him for ten minutes before he leaves Paris (for Africa!), I shall be able to convince him that I am all that he believed me to be before our last miser-

able meeting, at which time I was led to suppose that he was exactly all which he has since thought me.

“ADELE DE CORDILLAC.

“Rue de Lille, half-past three, A.M.

23d April, 1835.”

“And this you have kept sacred and secret from every eye!” cried the young man, seizing the hand of the old servant in both his own with that cordial hold which hand takes of hand when the heart propels it. “When I forget this, Roger Humphries, may every good man forget me!”

“A young man must not be surprised because an old man is honest,” said Roger, smiling through something very like tears. “Miss Adèle, now, would not be surprised at it, because, for certain sure, she never would have trusted me had she not known pretty well that I deserved it.”

“Deserved it!—Excellent old friend!—She is giving proof of it this very moment, Roger, that she does know what you deserve. The

family have left Paris,—gone far away, I know not where; and this young lady, your angel mistress, Roger, has returned hither alone and unprotected, because she discovered by accident that you had fallen into trouble upon her account. I have not time,—why does not that villainous gaoler come back again?—I do not wish at this moment to have time, Roger, to explain all she has done—all she was going to do in order to restore your liberty; I can only say—Oh! why does not that fellow return!—I can only say that mistress and servant are worthy of each other.”

“God bless her!” said the old man fervently; “she deserves a better friend to serve her than ever I can hope to be. But, Mr. Alfred Coventry!—excuse me, sir, if I take the liberty to say, that I hope the secret I have gone joyfully into prison to keep, will not be spoken to those who have no business to hear it in order to get me out again. Don’t let that be, young gentleman! I can never forget,—no never, how beautiful and innocent

her face looked, dyed all over with blushes, when she gave me that bit of a letter to carry to your honour. ‘Take care of my secret, dear Roger!’ Those were her very words; and then she went on and said, ‘I feel as if I could not live if I did not send this letter; but as if I must die, Roger, if any but the one for whom it is intended should see it!’ Did not that shew confidence, your honour? Did not that shew trust? Did not that prove that she held me worthy to be her friend, as I may say, as well as her servant? And where is the prison, or the halter either, that would have frightened me into betraying her?”

These last words were uttered with a burst of emotion that shewed itself on the face of the old man very like

“Iron tears down Pluto’s cheek.”

Nor was the manhood of Coventry proof against the spectacle; but while the sympathetic drop still trembled in his eye, he once more started up, exclaiming, “Why does he stay so long? Roger! Roger! every thing will

go well, if I can but get to her. All the confounded parcel of nonsense and falsehood with which they have been endeavouring to overwhelm you will all be cleared away, like mist before the sun, if they will but let me out!"

Roger was quite persuaded that, now Miss Adèle's letter had been properly delivered, no further harm could come of it; and when Coventry again interrupted his own lamentations at the turnkey's delay, in order to assure his companion that the fact of his having been elsewhere when the crime of which he stood accused was committed, would now be proved without injury to any one, the patient prisoner was not only perfectly satisfied for himself, but did his best to convince his impatient new friend that the interval during which they had been left together was not quite so long as it seemed.

Roger was not believed; but, nevertheless, he was right, and the surly-looking gaoler faithful: for he came with great exactness at the appointed moment.

"Thank Heaven!" exclaimed Coventry, as

he heard the welcome footstep. “ Now then, farewell, Roger! Dear, excellent old friend, many minutes shall not pass before I shall hear your name uttered with the praises and blessings it deserves by the lips of Adèle de Cordillac. For a few days longer, Roger, she must endure the pain of knowing that her brave and faithful friend is thus vilely lodged ; but after the trial, and when your noble fidelity shall have been acknowledged, I need hardly tell you that your home and hers will be the same. Meanwhile, all the comforts which the law permits, shall be yours in the interval. There goes the key! God bless you!”

The rapidity with which Mr. Coventry made his exit the instant the door was opened, so startled the slow and very unvolatile functionary, that for a moment he looked as much dismayed as if he had seen a prisoner escape, and the first expressive movement of feature that he had ever seen Roger Humphries exhibit was at that moment, when the old man burst into a hearty laugh.

" You shall grin in the galleys before you are a fortnight older!" growled the turnkey, as he once more closed the door, and locked it upon the solitary but well-contented old man.

* * * *

Madame de Hautrivate appeared to be, and perhaps really was, more deeply wounded by seeing her niece, the daughter of a Cordillac, dressed in the humblest garb with which the stores of her waiting-maid had been able to supply her, than by all the misfortunes which seemed to encompass her *aimable beau-frère*. When Adèle met her at breakfast on the morning after her arrival she was greeted by a cry that very nearly approached a scream, and then followed such a storm of lady-like expletives, that it took some minutes before the young lady's quiet assurances that this evil should be remedied without delay, could be heard. And even when, at length, the words which were intended to pacify her reached her understanding, they failed totally in producing the desired effect; for the want of sufficient

interest in the subject which they betrayed rendered the affectionate aunt as miserable concerning the moral condition of her niece, as she had before been for the disgraceful deficiencies of her wardrobe.

“ *Est-ce vous? — Grand Dieu! — est-ce bien la fille de ma sœur qui parle sur ce ton, garnie d'un vêtement semblable? Mais c'est incroyable! c'est inouï!* ”

Poor Adèle did her very best to persuade her aunt that she considered her cotton gown and its appurtenances as very serious calamities; and as Madame de Hautrivate had the satisfaction of perceiving, upon more minute examination, that her offending relative did certainly look very ill and very miserable, she suffered herself by degrees to be appeased; and, on receiving exactly all that remained in the little purse of Adèle, declared herself ready, for the honour of the noble houses of Tremouille and Cordillac, to set forth in person to purchase all that was necessary for her decent equipment; “ till such time as she should have received her rents, when she

would willingly," she said, " charge herself (for the love she bore her ever-lamented sister) with the troublesome task of making her in all respects fit to be seen."

As Adèle dreaded nothing so much as having the strength she was hoarding for the terrible day of Roger's trial wasted and worn out by the file-like process of scolding and complaining, she yielded her full and entire consent to all these plans for her embellishment, and had, moreover, sufficient presence of mind to add, that if Madame took all that trouble for her, she hoped she would not refuse to take a little more of the same kind for herself; as it would be her particular wish to present her with a dress if she would do her the great favour of choosing it.

This made all things smooth between them; and, as soon as it was possible for Madame to get out of her *déshabillé de matin*, she sallied forth, almost as well pleased to go as Adèle was to get rid of her.

For the first few moments after she was thus left, Adèle felt her solitude a relief;

but, as all the circumstances of the dreadful task before her recurred to her memory, her heart seemed to faint and die within her. For a high-born young girl of any land to come forward in open court and disclose herself guilty of having carried on a secret, midnight communication with a young man, a stranger to her blood and her country, may well be allowed to be a painful—a tremendous undertaking. But for Adèle de Cordillac, a young and noble French girl, known in every fashionable circle in Paris—for her to come forward thus, alone and unsupported by the protecting presence of any single relation or friend, was almost equivalent to an open declaration of infamy ; and tears of mingled shame and terror ran down her cheeks as she thought of it.

It was at this moment that an altercation at the outer door of Madame's ante-room made itself heard in the *salon* ; but it was little heeded by Adèle, who knew that both the man and woman servant had received orders

from their mistress to admit no one till her return. Yet still the noise increased, and a sound, like the effect of positive violence, startled her; but, before she had time to be frightened, or to ask herself what it might mean, the door of the *salon* was thrown open, and Alfred Coventry stood before her.

Adèle did not scream—she did not even speak; but she rose up, her tear-bedewed cheeks, which for an instant were as pale as death, becoming “celestial rosy red,” her hands clasped, and her eyes fixed upon the face of the intruder with an expression that seemed to have more doubt of his identity than fear of his presence.

The footman stood with the handle of the door in his hand, while the head, or at any rate the eyes, of Madame’s *femme de chambre* were visible over his shoulder.

Before Coventry uttered a word, he turned round; and the first accents of the voice so often wished for which reached the ears of Adèle were,—

"Have the kindness to tell them, Mademoiselle de Cordillac, that you do not require their presence."

"Go, good friends!" said Adèle gently, but strongly pressing her clasped hands upon her heart in the hope of stilling the palpitation which seemed threatening to choke her. "Go, Josephine,—go, Edward—I do not want you."

The door was immediately closed, and Mademoiselle de Cordillac and Mr. Coventry left alone.

Adèle reseated herself, which she was quite right to do, being by no means in a condition to stand; and Alfred, drawing a paper from his bosom, approached her. For half a moment he stood gazing on her lovely but averted face, and then dropping on one knee before her, he extended the hand which held open the little billet that had caused her so much woe, and said, "Adèle! was this note intended for me?"

She glanced her eye upon the paper, and stretched out her hand to seize it. He let her take it from him; but as, instead of

answering his question, she seemed about to crush the precious paper with very injurious disregard to its frail texture, he boldly ventured to assert his right to it by catching it, together with the trembling fingers that held it, in both his hands, exclaiming,—

“ I would aid Mademoiselle de Cordillac, at the hazard of my life, in destroying all that she wished destroyed, save this! While I live, Adèle, this lives too,” he added, carefully replacing the paper in his bosom; “ and when I die, if I have any one near loving me well enough to fulfil my last wish, it shall be buried with me.”

As one of Alfred’s hands was sufficient to replace the precious scroll in its sanctuary, the other still clasped that which had traced the characters upon it; nor did Adèle seek to withdraw it. Oh! she had suffered too much to play any part at that moment,—not even that prettiest and most forgivable of female wiles which teaches a young girl, as by a radical instinct of her nature, to hide the first deep joy of knowing that where she loves

she is beloved — not even that was in her power now. She turned her eyes upon him, and, in the midst of her solitary desolation, seemed to see a friend on whose affection, though as yet scarcely avowed, her soul trusted with undoubting faith. And her heart, as if laid bare by the rude work it had encountered since she had seen him last, uttered audibly by her lips, “Thank God!”

“ My precious Adèle! my first—my only love! Let me now owe the joy those dear words gave me only, only to the misery which I too well know this blessed paper has cost you! Tell me, tell me, if only by one glance of that speaking eye, whose language has for months been my only study;—tell me, Adèle, that you do not repent having written that letter,—tell me but this, and all—all will be well!”

“ All!” repeated Adèle, with a sigh. “ Alas! that cannot be. Yet I will tell you, Mr. Coventry, that much as I must for ever, and for ever, regret the consequences which it has brought upon my faithful messenger,

and, through him, on me, I neither do nor can repent it ; if it be the means of convincing you that I am not the unworthy creature you had so much reason to think me."

It was now Alfred Coventry's turn to cry "Thank God!" which he did with an emphasis that left no doubt of his sincerity on the mind of his auditor. And beyond this there is no need that the pen of the historian should follow them ; for who is there who could be so "earthly dull" as not to guess the full and perfect explanation which followed ? But dear as these remarks were to both, both felt the cruel necessity of cutting them short. For, even after each had been made most satisfactorily acquainted with the feelings of the other, there was still much that required discussion before the return of Madame de Hautrivaige ; and it was Adèle who, first recollecting this, disturbed the smooth stream of happiness on which they were so delightfully embarked, by exclaiming, "But oh ! this trial, Coventry !—this dreadful, dreadful trial. This cannot be prevented, nor

even delayed; for though the *alibi* will now be proved by no less than three testimonies besides my own, I know that as the poor fellow has been committed to take his trial, nothing but the judgment of the court can release him."

"It is but too true, dearest!" returned the lover, looking at her with eyes that, while they seemed intending to express the concern which such an avowal called for, had nevertheless an expression of happiness in them which Adèle could not understand. This was very strange, considering how terrible for her was the necessity which he allowed to exist. But there was no room for displeasure in her heart, and she only said,—

"Would I could look forward to its being over, as you seem to do, Coventry, 'and leap the gulf between,'" fancying that the look which had puzzled her was produced by the hope that when the dreadful business was over, happiness might yet be in store for them. "But I cannot," she continued,—"I cannot forget, even while you are with me, the agony

of avowing that I sent him on this secret embassy. Would it be possible,—oh, Alfred! would it be possible to get him acquitted, without shewing that his silence was for my sake,—without confessing, in short, that I sent him? And that all his reprobate obstinacy arose from being ashamed of betraying an indiscretion which I was not ashamed to commit?"

Alfred Coventry paused a little before he answered, and then said, "Need I tell you, my beloved Adèle, that had I the power I would save you not only from this, but from every painful feeling that could assail you from any quarter? But I will not attempt to deceive you in this matter. It is impossible to suppose that any tribunal, charged with the trial of an individual for a crime so important as that of which old Roger stands accused, will pronounce his acquittal without having thoroughly sifted every circumstance connected with the testimony given, both as to his guilt and his innocence. This *alibi* that you have so generously come forward to es-

tablish, dearest Adèle, and in proof of which you have been fortunate enough to find such very competent witnesses,—this *alibi* cannot be canvassed without leading, of necessity, to the discovery of the parties between whom this guiltless old man was the messenger. For will not every one of the individuals whom your active friend, M. de Servac, so triumphantly boasts of finding,—will they not, every one of them, set forth the fact as a necessary link in their chain of evidence, that Roger Humphries came at a certain hour to the Hôtel —, in the Rue de Rivoli, for the purpose of delivering a letter, or a message, to me; and then will M. de Servac, beyond all question, summon me; he cannot do otherwise consistently with his duty to the client whose cause you have intrusted to him. And how will the matter stand then, Adèle? Will it not appear,—let me answer as cautiously and as vaguely as I will,—that a domestic of your house was employed at a very unusual hour to convey a letter, or message, to me? It is dreadful to torture you thus,

my best beloved," added Coventry, as the poor girl dropped her head on the table, and hid her face in her hands; "but to deceive you would be more dreadful still. I cannot hope to escape questioning as to the nature of the communication; remember that nothing could be said or done in your family at a moment so very near the time when the crime was perpetrated, which it is the object of the tribunal to punish, that would not be examined into with the most pertinacious exactness. It were folly to doubt it, Adèle. The fact of your having sent Roger to me must be stated, and must be proved. So only can you hope to extricate this poor man from the danger in which he stands."

A stifled groan from Mademoiselle de Cordillac was the only answer to this too convincing statement, and the countenance of her lover would have proved to her, could she have seen it, that she did not suffer alone.

An interval of silence followed, which was one of very strong emotion to them both, though not exactly from the same cause; for

the lady was suffering from a feeling nearly approaching to despair, while every pulse of the gentleman was throbbing with hope.

This silence was at length broken by Coventry, who said in a voice which he vainly endeavoured to render firm and composed, “Adèle, there is but one means by which we can escape all suffering from the consequences of your generous exertion for this poor man ; but one, Adèle,—one alone, and that I almost fear to propose to you.”

“ Fear nothing, Mr. Coventry,” said Adèle, with sudden animation. “ Speak, I entreat you ! Tell me what you mean ; and be very sure there is no exertion, no sacrifice, which I should deem too great, could I but thereby escape the killing exposure you speak of.”

“ No sacrifice, Adèle,—not even the sacrifice of punctilio ?” replied Coventry.

“ Punctilio, Alfred ! what can you mean ? Gracious Heaven ! is this a moment to think of punctilio ? Do not jest with me, dear friend ; but if, indeed, you can devise any mode, any possible plan, by which I might

avoid what I so greatly dread, be very sure I will adopt it, and that most thankfully."

" Only promise me forgiveness, if what I say should offend you, Adèle, and I will indeed point out a mode by which the necessity of your appearing will be entirely avoided."

" Offended! Surely you are trifling with me," she replied, still too eagerly occupied by the one terrible idea of avowing in open court what she had so often blushed in secret to remember, to attempt discovering what hidden meaning his words might have. "*Nothing* can offend that can be planned or plotted with such an object in view. But do not keep me in suspense! I feel as if I should be the very happiest creature that lives and breathes, could I but believe it possible that Roger Humphries could be set at liberty without my facing all the eyes that may be congregated to look upon me, while I proclaim aloud the having commissioned him to convey to you that most imprudent note."

" Imprudent! Oh, Adèle!—But it is not that point which we must now discuss. I

trust the time may come when you may feel disposed to describe it by another epithet. But, dearest—dearest Adèle! hear me with patience on another theme; for it is most necessary that, before your aunt returns, I should receive your answer upon a point that I feel to be the most important; no less so, indeed, than the decision as to whether you shall appear personally at the trial of Roger Humphries or not."

" Nay, Coventry, on that point you may receive my answer without any discussion at all. I will agree to any thing rather than appear in court."

Coventry smiled, but shook his head doubtfully.

" I dare not take you at your word, Adèle, lest you should reproach me afterwards, and say that I took an unfair advantage of your terror. But tell me, love, before I go on to state the remedy,—tell me what is it that you chiefly fear in answering to the summons you expect."

" Alas!" returned Adèle, " I fear every

thing *chiefly*,—and, alas! too, I fear that your boasted remedy is only to consist of a little wordy eloquence, intended to prove that the thing itself is less terrible than my dread of it. But even you, Coventry, will only speak in vain if this be your object. The terror with which I anticipate this scene is too real, and too well-founded also, to be charmed away, even by you."

"Nor, had I the power, Adèle, would I use it," replied the young man, gravely. "Could I wish, think you, that you should meet the gaze, the comments, and the ribald jests of an open court, and meet it unmoved? Oh! no, no, no; that is not it, Adèle,—you are wide, very wide, of the mark. But if you will not tell me what you chiefly fear, let me tell you. You fear to hear it said,—you fear to hear it proved, that Mademoiselle Adèle de Cordillac wrote secretly to Alfred Coventry. Is it not so?"

"Mr. Coventry, there is no need of this,—I feel it quite sufficiently," she replied, the tingling blood again mounting to her very temples.

" Then hear me, Adèle. This must never be ! It would kill you,—it would drive me mad. But yet *thus* it would be, Adèle. M. de Servac, whom you have engaged as advocate for the accused, will rise after all the evidence has been heard against the prisoner, and declare to the court that he is prepared to prove an *alibi*. If he does his duty by his client, you will be the first witness he will call. You would be able to prove having written the letter ; then would follow the evidence of the three men who are ready to swear that they saw and spoke to Roger Humphries before five o'clock ; and, lastly, they would have to question me, as to the fact of my having been, a short time before, at the place to which the letter was addressed, and so forth. But, instead of this, hear *what it must be*. When M. de Servac rises for the defence, he must be instructed to say that there is a gentleman in court prepared to prove not only that the prisoner was elsewhere when the Bertrand diamonds were stolen, but also to shew what was the nature of the business upon which he

was engaged, and its utter incompatibility with any partnership or participation with the adventures of Madame Bertrand in the interval between her having been seen in the ball-room and that at which, by her own account, the outrage was committed. And then, Adèle, I, the gentleman thus alluded to, would come forward, and testify on oath to the following facts :—That Roger Humphries was despatched from the Rue de Lille at four o'clock on the morning of the 24th of April (half an hour earlier than the time at which three or four gentlemen are ready to swear they saw Madame Bertrand in the ball-room), and that Roger Humphries was despatched at that hour by **MY WIFE**, Madame Coventry, with a letter addressed to me at the Hôtel —, Rue de Rivoli."

Adèle started,—and in the burning blush that dyed her beautiful face as she involuntarily raised her eyes to those of her lover, Alfred saw at once the almost terrified emotion which the sudden hearing of such words naturally produced, and the ingenuous avowal

that he had indeed discovered a way to deprive her courageous testimony of all its bitterness. This would certainly have been, in some degree, the case any where; but in France, the remedy to her embarrassment which this change of name and title offered was greatly more perfect and complete than can fully be understood by any one unacquainted with the peculiarly *sacred* value attached to marriage in that country.

Adèle saw at once that the labyrinth-like coil of misery which seemed to have been twisting and twisting itself round her from the hour in which she had listened to her gay aunt's pleasant jest about Coventry, was now cut asunder as by the hand of an enchanter, and that she stood free and unscathed, with power to aid and support her poor Sabina more effectually than she had ever dared to hope; with means as unfettered as her will to set the faithful Roger free; and—and In short, and despite all and every thing that the abruptness of the business could conjure up to frighten her, she did feel at that moment

that she was the very happiest creature in the world.

Did she tell Mr. Coventry so? Of course she did not. To feel all she felt, was as right as it was natural, and as delightful as it was both. But to mention it to the man who stood gazing at her as if his life depended on the first word that she should deign to utter, was totally out of the question,—was, in fact, totally impossible, and contrary to the nature of things as arranged by the Master-hand that framed us. It is, doubtless, for this reason that man is endowed with a power, whenever occasion requires it, of finding out with such wonderful rapidity and correctness, and in defiance of the most obstinate silence, and the most averted eyes, pretty nearly all that the fair statues before which he bends take such exceeding pains to conceal. So it was with Mr. Coventry. Mademoiselle de Cordillac spoke not,—she moved not; and the first proof she gave that she was not actually marble, was the shedding (Miranda-like) a few bright tears, which shewed upon her

cheeks most wonderfully like dew-drops upon the petals of a new-blown rose. But, somehow or other, the gentleman very soon became as well assured of the agreeable fact, that all he wished on earth was his as the lady ; and then, for a few short moments, they were so improvident as to forget that any such person as Madame de Hautrivate existed in the world. Most properly were they punished for this indiscretion ; for at a very tender moment, and when nobody in the world could have desired the entrance of any aunt in existence, good, bad, or indifferent, Madame de Hautrivate stood before them.

Fortunately, however,—if, indeed, the insular audacity of the young Englishman had led him to attempt snatching a kiss from the blushing descendant of such an immense line of de Cordillacs and de Tremouilles,—the deed was not actually witnessed by Madame ; for the chenille fringe of her black velvet mantille having been caught by some obstruction in the doorway, she had turned to extri-

cate it, and thereby afforded time for both parties to seat themselves, with a becoming interval of space between, and as much appearance of composure as could have been reasonably hoped for.

Madame de Hautrivate had gone out in good-humour, and having spent the interval in the presence of materials for wearing apparel, of which she hoped ere long to appropriate a part, she returned in the same amiable state of mind. Nevertheless she was a good deal startled at the sight of this *tête-à-tête* in her drawing-room, and her first emotion was decidedly aunt-like and disapproving. But Madame de Hautrivate was, as the intelligent reader must be already aware, a woman of a quick and ready capacity. She certainly made Mr. Coventry a courtesy, in which there appeared more of ceremony than affection; but before it was finished—before she had fully recovered the upright dignity of her usual attitude, she remembered more than one important fact. She remembered, first, that the young man before her was an excel-

lent *parti* in every way; next, that a little blunder of her own had seemed for a long time to have robbed her niece of all chance of obtaining it; and lastly, she recollects, with a good deal of distinctness, that her elegant brother-in-law, though the most noble-minded man in the world, had been declared by his *intendant* to be ruined, and that it was therefore probable the young ladies, her nieces, would not in future have such favourable opportunities for forming splendid alliances as they had heretofore enjoyed. All this together brought a charming smile to her lips, as she repeated her favourite phrase,— “*Mais, c'est une éternité!*” &c. &c. In short, it was immediately evident that Adèle’s *futur* had nothing to fear from the severity of her aunt; but Alfred Coventry was almost as quick-witted a person as Madame de Hautri-vage herself, and being aware that a great deal of business was to be done with very little time to do it in, he suffered himself not to be beguiled into any of the thousand and one *aimable* discussions upon which Madame

was evidently so willing to enter, but manfully plunged into the very pith and marrow of what he had to say to her at once.

“ Madame de Hautrivate,” he began, “ it is impossible, when hearing you converse, not to regret that times are not with us what they used to be in the Rue de Lille, when no serious affairs obliged us to sacrifice pleasure to business. The fact is, that at this moment a cruel necessity constrains me to say that I have but few minutes in which to enjoy the gratification ever afforded by your society; and even that time, short as it is, must be employed in confiding to you a matter which is to me of the greatest importance, and which the *aimable* kindness with which you have ever treated me, leads me to hope will be neither uninteresting nor displeasing to you.”

During this opening harangue Adèle had stolen out of the room, leaving the charming Clementina and Mr. Coventry considerably more likely to understand one another than when they had last found themselves *tête-à-tête*.

No sooner had the door now closed upon

Adèle than the good lady uttered half-a-dozen pretty exclamations in a breath, all tending to shew that she knew perfectly well what was coming, and was delighted with it. “ But you must excuse the poor Adèle,” she said, “ if this takes her so greatly by surprise as to prevent her receiving you with all the politeness *d'une jeune fille bien élevée*. I know she will be amazingly surprised, *pauvre enfant!* Yet who is there but me to dispose of her? It is a duty which has devolved upon me, and I perform it well, Monsieur Coventry, in bestowing her upon you. *C'est malheureux* that the establishment of my *aimable beau-frère* is broken up! *Mais que voulez-vouz?*—You, of course, heard of his noble *dévouement* and all that it has cost him? *C'est sublime!* *mais parfaitement sublime, sans doute.* Cependant—just at this moment it is unfortunate. However, *mon cher neveu*, if you will but give me time, I doubt not that I shall be able to manage our *trousseau* perfectly to the satisfaction of the Cordillac and Tremouille families; but time is every thing.”

"But unfortunately, my dear lady," replied Coventry, stoutly, "time is what I cannot grant you; and my Adèle must be contented to let her *trousseau* follow her, or await her return to Paris."

The black, arched, and expansive eye-brows of Madame de Hautrivate mounted to the very top of her forehead, and a spirited remonstrance, beginning with the ominous words, "*Les Anglais!*" was about to burst upon him, when he cut the matter short by inquiring if Madame had been made acquainted with the very disagreeable business which had brought Mademoiselle de Cordillac to Paris?

"Oh, yes," she replied, "I know all that perfectly well. Adèle is come to receive her rents; and though it is possible she might have preferred receiving her income through the hands of her noble-minded *beau-frère*, I can hardly call the receiving the money herself a disagreeable business, especially as M. de Servac is so old a friend, and so perfectly ready to arrange every thing for her."

“ Ah, madame ! ” returned Coventry, “ *vous n'y estes pas.* ” He then asked her, if she was aware of the situation in which Roger Humphries, Mr. Hargrave’s old English servant, was at present placed.

“ *Mais certainement !* ” replied Madame de Hantrivage, colouring violently, and with an accent of the deepest indignation ; “ and a dreadful misfortune it is, that a man so every way estimable as my *beau-frère* should have so dreadful a villain in his service.—*Les Anglais,* ” she began again ; but once more he stopped her, and now informed her, as briefly and as clearly as he could, that Mademoiselle de Cordillac, knowing the old man to be perfectly innocent, inasmuch as she had herself sent him elsewhere precisely at the time when Madame Bertrand was robbed, was now in Paris, less for the purpose of receiving her rents, than for that of proving the innocence of her old servant. After allowing a short interval for Madame’s violent surprise to evaporate in exclamation, he steadily pursued his object by saying,—

"That Mademoiselle de Cordillac is right in this, it is impossible that any person of honour can doubt. Nevertheless, madame, the appearance of the young lady in open court will be highly objectionable and equally disagreeable, I have no doubt, both to you and to me, without even attempting to say how dreadfully repugnant it must be to all her own feelings of delicacy. For this, my dear lady, there is but one remedy. Mademoiselle de Cordillac must never be summoned into a public court. But if it be found necessary that Madame Coventry should appear, there can be no kind of objection to it, especially as her husband will be summoned also. But even this will not, as I flatter myself, be necessary when she is my wife, as I believe her husband's statement will be considered as perfectly satisfactory. Thus, madame, you perceive that an immediate marriage is rendered necessary. And it shall be my care so to hasten the business portion of the necessary preliminaries as to prevent any inconvenience from this involuntary haste."

There was such a mixture of decision, authority, and reason, in the manner in which this was spoken, that Madame de Hautrivate appeared totally at a loss what to reply to it in the way of opposition, and yet it was evident that there was something in this mode of managing matters which was greatly less than agreeable to her. Coventry, who was exceedingly anxious that this hasty and agitating proceeding should be rendered as little painful to Adèle as possible, watched her narrowly, in order to discover what part of the omitted ceremonies she seemed to consider as the most essential, in the hope of finding some means of supplying it; well aware that nothing would be more likely to harass the feelings of his already trembling bride than any avowed displeasure on the part of the only relative whom circumstances permitted her to have near her. Nor did he watch in vain; for, together with many dainty phrases concerning the solemnity which ought to be observed in all ceremonies connected with families of distinction, several slight allusions were made to the incorrectness,

not to say indecency, of marrying, especially where the bride was a lady of fortune, without a *corbeille*; and the words *cadeau* and *cachemire* caught his ear distinctly, though the sentences of which they made part were too rapidly muttered for him to feel very sure of their purport. But Coventry, as we have said, was a quick-witted young man; and waiting not for further explanations, or wasting a moment in making compliments, apologies, or wordy work of any kind, he suddenly started up, seized his hat, and uttering, with a somewhat theatrical air, “*Adieu, ma tante!*” quitted the room and the house.

The head or the heart, or the *musée of speech* of Madame de Hautrivate was too full for her to endure being long left alone, and the agitated but delicious solitude of Adèle was soon invaded by a request from her aunt that she would *please* to come to her directly. To please or to be pleased in doing this was quite out of the question; but as far as obedience was in her power, she yielded; and, with shaking joints and a beating heart, Mademoiselle de

Cordillac repaired to the presence of her aunt.

It would be a useless task to attempt rehearsing all the wisdom uttered by Madame de Hautrivate on this occasion. The catalogue of dresses — the enumeration of trinkets — the necessity of new equipages — all were dwelt upon with the most pathetic eloquence. That every thing *must* be had was asserted as a broad fact that could not admit of discussion ; and that nothing *could* be had was declared almost at the same moment, in a tone no less positive. Adèle bore it all like an angel ; in which, to say truth, there was no great merit, for she was far too happy to care greatly for any lamentations that could possibly be uttered upon the miseries, great and small, of human life. She did at last get a little weary, however, and having repeated, for about the hundred and fiftieth time, that unhappily there was no law to regulate necessity, she was making up her mind to receive the rest in silence, when a ring was heard at the outward door, and a minute or two after-

wards the man-servant entered with an extremely large brown paper parcel in his arms, the maid-servant following with another, of hardly less dimensions, in hers. Both were addressed to Madame de Hautrivate.

“*Mais qu'est-ce, que c'est, donc?*” exclaimed the good lady, with that sudden species of animation which is always produced on persons of her temperament by the sight and touch of such packages. “There must be some mistake, I fear,” she continued, looking first at one servant, then at the other, and then at Adèle. “I am quite positive that I have purchased nothing whatever, except those few things for you, my dear, which were brought home two hours ago. I suppose I had better open them, but I am quite sure that there must be some mistake.”

The two servants sang forth a duetto of reduplicated assurances that there was no mistake at all; for that the man who brought the packages had asked over and over again, very particularly, if Madame de Hautrivate lived there.

"*Eh bien donc!*" she replied, in terms of unmitigated delight. "In that case you may cut the cords, one of you, and we shall soon see what it means."

The meaning did not long remain a mystery. The cords were cut ; one, two, three envelopes of paper (the first being very coarse, and the last very fine) removed, such a treasure of rich mercery was displayed as shook her philosophy to the very centre.

But exquisite as were the satins and the silks, the laces and the embroidery, which constituted the contents of the first and largest parcel, that which permitted its softness to be compressed into the compass of the lesser one caused a perfect scream of ecstasy to burst from the lungs of Madame de Hautrivate. Two cashmere shawls, of the very finest texture, the very largest size, the most perfect colours, and the richest patterns, either being worthy of becoming the state turban of the Sultan, lay before her ; and between them both was placed a billet well deserving to be called "*doux*," in which Mr. Coventry respectfully

requested her acceptance of whichever of the two shawls might chance to please her fancy best, and begged, as an additional favour, that she would have the kindness to present the other in his name to his fair *fiancée*. As to the other articles, he said that he had taken the liberty of sending them jointly to the aunt and niece, to spare them all unnecessary trouble at a time when every hour was precious, as he was sure she would have the kindness to feel, when he told her that the object which made her niece's immediate marriage necessary could not be achieved if the ceremony were delayed beyond the third day from the present. He should take care, he added, that every thing should be ready for this which could possibly come within his province to arrange, and he ventured to flatter himself that Madame de Hautrivaige would employ the interval in getting the materials he had taken the liberty to send converted into such dresses for herself and her niece as her exquisite taste and judgment might approve.

It is a prodigious advantage to have to deal

with people whose natures are sufficiently candid to permit their ruling passions to be discerned. From that moment there was nothing imaginable which Alfred Coventry could have asked for or proposed, which Madame de Hautrivaige would have objected to or refused. Her very soul was touched and melted, as it were, before the all-powerful influence which his sagacity had set to work upon her.

“Dieu ! quel homme !” she exclaimed, *“quelle perfection de noblesse, et de bon goût ! Et puis, le choix à moi ! Hélas ! Comment croire que je n'avais pas, en quelque sorte, raison, quand . . . Mais il ne faut pas y penser ! Pauvre Alfred ! à ce moment même il me laisse le choix ! Eh bien ! Il a raison. Elle est riche, et moi, je ne le suis pas.”*

It cannot be necessary to inform the intelligent reader that the greatest part of this was uttered not quite half aloud ; so that nobody knew more of what was passing in her grateful and susceptible heart than was convenient.

From this moment Adèle was troubled no more with regrets and lamentations concern-

ing the hurried pace at which the preparations for her marriage were to proceed; and when their *tête-à-tête* dinner was over, she was left to the enjoyment of solitary musing on the extraordinary change which had taken place in her circumstances within the last twenty-four hours, while Madame assembled in her bed-room as many *artistes* as it was possible to get together on so short a notice.

In their different ways, both the ladies were exceedingly happy. It might, indeed, be in some degree difficult to decide which was the most so.

CHAPTER IX.

THE departure of Adèle, though her absence was not expected to be long, was a calamity which Sabina feared she should not bear well; and for the first hour or two after her departure she shut herself into the room they had shared together, less for the comfort of weeping unmolested than for the purpose of schooling herself into such a degree of fortitude and composure as might enable her to appear before her father in such a state as not to give him pain. She had already learned, poor girl! that the most strictly required, as well as the most difficult, duty she had to perform in their seclusion was such command of feature as might prevent him from supposing that she was thinking with regret of the past; and far

from repining at the symptoms of temper which brought this sort of selfish tyranny to view, her heart ached as she thought how much her beloved father must have suffered to make him thus keenly sensitive. And it was in such thoughts as these that her greatest fund of strength lay. Without them it is possible that, left without the presence and support of the dear friend and counsellor to whom she had ever looked, in every joy and every sorrow, as the pilot who would keep her from going wrong, she might have sunk under the many sorrows that had fallen on her young head, and given herself up to hopeless melancholy. But what she could not have borne well for herself, she could bear well for him ; and having bathed her swollen eyelids, combed her silken hair, and breathed a prayer to Heaven to strengthen her, she left her room, and stole out to take her best-loved solitary path to the well-known rock, determined not to re-enter the more than ever desolate walls of the residence till she felt able to meet her father with a smile.

Mr. Hargrave, on his side, was as busily employed in preparation as herself; but his object held no great affinity with hers. Since the departure of those brilliant days in which he had felt within himself a consciousness of innate brightness, that made him feel his rising to be to his household what the rising of the sun was to the rest of the world,—since the departure of those blissful days, Mr. Hargrave had fallen into the habit of lying in bed whenever he felt himself disposed to be “gentlemanlike and melancholy ;” and having no more inclination to bid Adèle farewell than she had to be bidden farewell by him, he resorted to this indulgence on the morning of her departure as a means of avoiding her. But the attainment of this object, if the first, was not the only motive for this retreat; and long after he was aware of her having left the house, he continued to enjoy the shelter of this favourite seclusion, for the purpose of digesting at his ease the immediate execution of a project towards which his thoughts had been for some time turned, but which, till now, he

had not considered as of any pressing necessity.

Though not quite so very clever a fellow as he thought himself, Mr. Hargrave had discernment enough to perceive that Adèle, notwithstanding the essential services she had rendered him, retained neither for his person nor character the slightest trace of the affection she had formerly borne him. The masterly manner in which she had managed his escape, and opened, by her admirable political insinuation, a vista for future manœuvring (which was, by the by, more hit than wit on her part, poor girl!), all this induced him to form an extremely exalted idea of her ability; but this was unaccompanied by any thing like a just idea of the beautiful *morale* of her character.

He knew that she disliked him, and felt persuaded that, having become heartily (and naturally) sick of the desolate seclusion of their Mummel palace, she had seized upon the arrest of Roger Humphries as an excuse for being off. Her independent fortune, and the many

noble connexions who would be glad to receive her, rendered this plan as rational in his eyes as he felt it to be probable; and the more he thought of it, the more fully he became convinced that Mademoiselle de Cordillac was gone to Paris, without any intention of returning, and that, whether for the emancipation of old Roger, or the gratification of universal curiosity, or because she would find it, one way or another, impossible to avoid it, his part in the Bertrand adventure, as well as in some others, would speedily become known, his hiding-place betrayed, and himself dragged out of it to condign punishment.

These ideas having once taken possession of his mind strengthened with every hour spent in the examination of them. He had learned to hate his step-daughter quite as heartily as he believed that she hated him, and, so far from seeing any thing improbable or monstrous in the course which he believed her about to pursue, he would, in truth, have been inclined to bestow these epithets on any other.

"Let her go, let her talk, let her recover her position, as she can. It is no more than I had every reason to expect. But as to making me the sacrifice, she will find herself mistaken if she expects it." It was thus his recumbent meditations ended; and having perfectly decided what to do, he sprung with renewed activity from his bed, summoned his *valet de chambre*, Gertrude, and his running footman, Hans,—employed the first in aid of the sundry necessities of his reduced toilet, and the last in conveying a very earnest message to Father Mark, requesting to see him immediately, and then sat himself down with a cup of strong coffee to prepare for the business he had to perform.

There was one corner of Mr. Hargrave's heart—for every animal has a heart of some kind or other—which was not entirely and altogether, solely and wholly, filled with himself. This was the corner in which the image of Sabina dwelt; but even from this, though he did not occupy it wholly and alone, he was not banished. Oh, no! That any thought

or feeling could exist in the heart or soul of Hargrave, unmixed with self, was as impossible as that a balloon should float without air, or a steam-boat be propelled without hot water. So, even in Sabina's corner; his own gratification, his own pride, and his own ambition, had found place, and nestled, side by side, with his paternal love.

All that can truly be said, therefore, of the share his daughter had in the schemes which now engrossed him, was that she was not forgotten.

On the entrance of Father Mark Mr. Hargrave rose to receive him with much more than usual solemnity. He approached him with his arms crossed on his breast,—not in the “sad knot of Jaques,” but soldier-wise, and with the aspect (admirably well *singé*) of a monk professed, and in the full-blown odour of especial sanctity.

“I have sent for you, Father Mark,” he said, “that I might communicate to you the meditations of the past night, inspired, as I cannot fail to believe, by the most holy Do-

minic, the patron saint to whom I am dedicated. I have sent to you, father, to tell you what these meditations have been, and, also, the resolution at which I have arrived at in consequence of them."

Father Mark was by this time so accustomed to the sanctified pomposity of his new penitent that he listened to this exordium without deeming it necessary to return any other answer than a meek bowing of the head. But when Mr. Hargrave, after signing to the priest to take a chair, while he placed himself in another, began to explain himself further, his confessor found it necessary to listen with rather more attention than usual, in order to prevent his making some blunder which might speedily, as it seemed, be conveyed direct to the foot of the Papal throne.

"I can no longer, father," resumed Mr. Hargrave, "resist, without sin, the inward impulse which leads me to repose the state secrets that burden my soul on those who are more qualified to convert them to good than either you or I, good father. My purpose

is to set off immediately for Rome. My stay there will depend on many circumstances, into which it is at this moment needless to enter. But should any arise that might make it desirable for me, who have so deeply involved myself in the struggle of two rival dynasties, to retire at once from the busy scenes of life, and to bury myself, and the important secrets intrusted to me, in a cloister, I should wish to be prepared with such testimonials from you, holy father, as may render the usual ceremony of novitiate unnecessary. I must desire you immediately to commit to paper all the facts you know concerning me, and also your opinion of the strict sanctity of my life, and of the ardour of my zeal to endow whatever holy society I may enter with the treasure (by no means contemptible), which I have still left from the ample fortune, of which I have hitherto dedicated so large a portion to the use of the elder branch of the Bourbon family. You will commit all this to paper, Father Mark, in case I may find it expedient to hasten the time of my profession."

Having said this, Mr. Hargrave rose, and sought for pens, ink, and paper, which he laid before the priest.

Father Mark continued to sit with his eyes fixed upon the ground, and without any intention, as it seemed, of employing the implements which had been set before him.

“ May I ask, holy father, what it is which delays your compliance with my request? ” said Mr. Hargrave.

“ Pardon me, my son,” said the good man, while the ruddy colour of his cheek mounted to his temples. “ But I was thinking how much it was I really did know of you. If I understand you right, the document you have desired me to prepare is to convey information to some of the highest depositaries of the holy authorities under which I am bound to live, and it needs, therefore, that I write nothing lightly.”

“ Nay, father,” returned Mr. Hargrave, colouring in his turn, “ I can proceed without your aid if you are thus scrupulous in affording it. It seems proper and natural that

every man, knowing the value of confession, and resorting to it with unvarying punctuality, as I do, should wish, on such a sacred mission (for so I must call it), to carry with him from the priest to whom he has most recently opened his heart, some testimony of the spiritual opinion formed of him. However, I will not press this task upon you. I must state to those I go to seek with the humble piety of a devoted heart, that I have not had the good fortune to fall in with a confessor whose views corresponded with my own ; and this will account for, and excuse, my appearing without such testimony. Fortunately there is no danger of my being long at Rome without receiving, both from the heads of the Gallican Church and from the royal exile himself, such letters as will furnish me with all the aid and all the authority I require. My only reason for addressing myself to you, Father Mark, was to make my entrance into a religious community as instantaneous as possible, for which there are

reasons connected with the cause I serve which may, doubtless, easily be divined by you."

" May the Pope and the holy college condemn me as a heretic," murmured the unfortunate priest to himself, " if I can divine, guess, or imagine, any thing about it." But the poor man was frightened. He knew himself to be profoundly ignorant of all the dynasties, and all the politics, and all the cabals, of the earth, and had only been made obscurely to comprehend, by his conferences with Mr. Hargrave, that the Pope and the holy Catholic religion were, somehow or other, mixed up with Charles Dix and that eloquent gentleman himself. But this was, of course, fully enough to make him amenable to the species of argument now brought forward to prove that he ought to do what was desired of him. He accordingly set himself to do it, but not without a sigh at the untoward fortune which doomed him for ever to be the advocate and eulogist of what he did not understand.

The document thus obediently framed was

very nearly all that Mr. Hargrave desired it to be, and trusting to the influence of his venerated uncle, the cardinal, for the rest, he told Father Mark, as he folded it up and placed it in his pocket-book, that he should not forget to speak favourably of him at Rome, and that he should set out for that venerable and venerated city on the morrow.

“To-morrow!” repeated Father Mark, in considerable surprise, but certainly not without a strong sensation of pleasure. “Is it possible, my son, that all your worldly concerns can be thus speedily set in order? Your excellent daughter, and the unfortunate heretical young lady her half-sister? What may be your purpose respecting them?”

“I will tell you, my good and holy friend,” replied Mr. Hargrave, “and I rest much on your aid, and on that of your pious and excellent mother, for carrying into effect my plans concerning them. As to Mademoiselle de Cordillac,—whom you most correctly term unfortunate, for who plunged in the errors of heresy can be otherwise?—she has already

disposed of herself, having left this house for Paris at day-break this morning. But my dear Sabina," and here a pang of real feeling stopped him for a moment, "as for her, Father Mark, I trust that you will extend your pious cares to her for a day or two,—in short, till I have been received into the convent I have named to you. After which, a letter, which I shall leave with her, will be forwarded to her aunt at Paris, who will, I doubt not, take care to send a proper escort to convey her to that city. In the meantime it would be an act of very holy charity if your inestimable mother would invite her to remain with her in the interval. But remember, holy father, that Sabina is not to suppose that I go without the intention of returning. After all it is extremely probable that I may return,—in fact, every thing will depend upon the wish and will of his holiness, to whom I shall submit myself in all things. But, in any case, I need have no lasting leave-takings, it would render me unfit for—for my duty."

Father Mark promised, in his own name, and in that of his good mother likewise, that no service which it was in their power to perform for the young lady should be omitted. And so he took his leave, little disposed to speculate upon the actions of the man who had rendered his religious functions a most heavy penance, simply by boring him almost beyond his pious power of endurance by the weight of his pompous egotism.

As soon as he was gone, Mr. Hargrave wrote a letter, which it was his purpose to leave with Father Mark, and which was to fix the fate of poor Sabina; and had it not been that the renewed terror of being followed, arrested, tried, and convicted, again seized upon him, it is probable that even his selfishly callous heart would have found the task nearly enough to master him. As it was, however, the lesser evil was swallowed up by the greater, and with little time lost in sorrow or uncertainty, he wrote the following epistle:—

"To Madame de Hautriveau."

"At the moment of quitting the busy haunts of a world which your charming society has so often contributed to render delightful to me, can you wonder, my charming sister, that some of my latest thoughts are devoted to you? Your niece, Adèle, informed you before our last hurried parting, how deeply I had involved myself by my enthusiasm for the cause of a CERTAIN INDIVIDUAL, whose name must not be trusted to the common post, which, I am sorry to say, is the only means I have of conveying these lines to you.

"Your intelligent mind and honourable feelings, my dear sister, will enable you to appreciate justly the motives which must now, and for ever, prevent my entering into any details respecting the confederation that has been formed for the purpose of restoring THAT PERSON to his rights. Over this an impenetrable darkness shall fall, as impassable and as sacred as that which is speedily about to envelope

myself. All upon this unhappy subject that you will ever hear from me is, that the plan, noble, disinterested, and generous as it was, has totally failed, the only successful effort belonging to it being that which has prevented any suspicion falling on those concerned in it, with the exception of my unhappy self. But think not that I repine at being thus selected, as it were, by fate as the only victim. I am contented, my dear Clementina, that so it should be. My spirit—my affections were, as, by the blessing of the most Holy Virgin, I have now learned to believe, too much wedded to the pomps and vanities of this lower world. All that is over! Weary of a state of things which I have not been able to amend, a short time only will pass before I shall be sheltered under the cowl of a monk, alike from the pleasures and the disappointments of life. I have, I think, fixed upon a beautiful but retired monastery in Andalusia as that in which I shall take the vows, and, as I hope, deposit my bones. Having said thus much of myself, I must add an explanation of my last wishes

respecting my daughter. Tell her, dear sister, from me, that nothing could have endowed me with sufficient courage to leave her, not even the holy voice which has called me to the cloister, had I not been aware that the sentence which would have fallen upon me from the present tyrannical government of France would have been more dreadful for her to witness than even our separation. Tell her, also, that I know her to be too good a Catholic not to find consolation in reflecting that the part I have chosen must ensure me a place among the saints in heaven. Nay, if exemplary holiness of life, and the exertion of the talents which I have been led to believe that Heaven has bestowed upon me, if this can ensure the being elected as a saint on earth, I may not, perhaps, altogether despair of one day adding to the honourable names from which she derives her descent—that of a canonised father!

“ Beyond such consolation as this assurance of my eternal well-doing will afford her, I have nothing to bequeath; and her affection-

ate heart will, I am well aware, require no more. From you, admirable Madame de Hautrivate, I look for the personal care and protection which I am no longer able to give. But you are not rich, and I look not to you for any pecuniary means for her support. On this point I wish you to address yourself to your niece, Mademoiselle de Cordillac. Tell her from me, if you please, as well as from yourself, that if she permits the daughter of her mother to want any thing that her ample fortune can bestow, she will prove her newly adopted faith to be even of a worse quality than I think it. But I cannot say that I have any fears on this point. I feel perfectly satisfied that before Adèle de Cordillac marries she will settle the half of her fortune on Sabina Hargrave. It is to her, therefore, my dear sister, that you must apply for the funds necessary for despatching to Gernsbach (a small town only a few miles distant from Baden-Baden) such an escort as you and her sister shall deem proper for conveying her to you at Paris. If you inquire at the sacristy of the

church at Gernsbach for *Father Mark*, as the good priest to whose care I have left her is familiarly called, you will learn where to find her.

“ And now, farewell! and be assured of the constant prayers of one who trusts that he shall not be accounted the last in the society of God’s saints.

“ Your affectionate brother,

“ CHARLES HARGRAVE.”

This task performed, he carefully examined the treasure still left in his hands, and had sufficient knowledge of precious stones to feel convinced that, let him bend his course which way he would,—to Rome, to Spain, to the light freedom of the United States, or the loose tyranny of imperial Russia, he should have sufficient wealth to be still a personage of some consequence in either. It is quite possible that had this treasure been in current coin, he might have indulged the only feeling of his heart not ending as well as beginning in self, by leaving with Sabina a share of it; but he was relieved

from any combat of doubts and wishes on this head by the obvious necessity of carrying away whatever might tend to raise a suspicion against him. Of the small residue of his golden hoard he did design a part for her ; and, having made the division of it in such proportions as he thought right and proper (in doing which he took into consideration the speedy replenishment of the little purse he was preparing by the sums which she would receive from her sister), he disposed of his own share, as well as of the jewels, into small and commodious divisions, to be secured in different parts of his dress. This done, he set about all the minor preparations for his departure, and had completed every thing just as he saw from his window the figure of Sabina slowly returning from her long ramble, or rather from her long repose upon the summit of the rock which jutted from the cliff above.

The heart of the father felt as keen a pang as it was possible such a heart could feel ; and for a moment or two he felt that rather than take leave of her, he would set off without her

knowledge, leaving to Father Mark the task of announcing his departure. For a short time this idea was a great relief to him; but when the thought crossed him that he had then seen her for the last time, he changed his mind. A longing wish to kiss her once again took possession of him, and, determining to spare himself the sight of her agony at bidding him a lasting, or even a long farewell, he mentally rehearsed a scene, which even then he pleased himself by thinking he should perform admirably; in which he should lead her to expect his speedy return, or, at the very worst, such a delay only as might oblige her to return to Paris for a short time, where she would rejoin her sister, and might remain in perfect assurance of his safety. But all this was planned solely to spare himself the pain of witnessing her grief, for he had no intention of leaving her many days in this delusion, being quite certain that as long as she nourished any hope of his return, she would, in all probability, refuse to take up her abode in Paris, where it was notorious that he could not

come, and might, moreover, set inquiries on foot respecting him which might prove anything but convenient.

One more interview with Father Mark was necessary; and the good priest obeyed the summons with the less reluctance, because he had such comfortable reason to believe it would be the last. The hour Mr. Hargrave fixed for this was at seven o'clock on that same evening. His *tête-à-tête* dinner with poor Sabina was sad enough, doubtless, for he was decidedly not gay, and she was as much the reverse as it was natural she should be, with the thoughts of Adèle's lonely wandering at her heart.

Immediately after the cup of coffee which always followed their dinner, Mr. Hargrave rose and said, “I have matters of importance, my dear Sabina, to discuss with Father Mark this evening, so I must leave you to your drawing and your books. Ah, my love! I shall never feel satisfied till things are so settled as to restore you to Paris; a brilliant fortune would be sure to open upon you there, but here you are lost!”

Sabina assured him, with the utmost sincerity, that if she could see him well and happy she should be perfectly contented, though certain of never beholding Paris again. But he shook his head incredulously, and, saying that he still hoped he should be able to manage matters for her better than that, he passed his hand, as he had done a thousand times before, over her silken hair, kissed her fair brow, and left her.

Hargrave rose on the following morning somewhat earlier than usual; for he chose himself to prepare the packages which were to convey the whole wardrobe of which he was now the master. Moreover, he had to dress himself with peculiar care; not indeed, as formerly, for the purpose of making five-and-forty years look like five-and-thirty; but he had his *treasure* to dispose of about his person, so as to be secure from observation, loss, or injury, and, above all else, to be so placed as not in any way to annoy his person. But all this was done, and Hans had received orders to be ready to attend him to Baden, before the

light step of Sabina was heard at his door, bringing her to inquire where and when he would like to take his breakfast.

“Immediately, my love, if you are ready, and with you,” was the reply; and, taking her arm under his, he led her to their usual sitting-room.

Sabina had not rested well; the idea of Adèle pursued her, and she had not once dropped to sleep without waking with a start from some painful dream, which again and again came to torment her, by placing before her eyes the pale and terrified countenance of her sister suffering under some travelling misadventure.

Her want of bloom, and of the bright look which used to make her so lovely, was remarked by her father; but every effort of his mind was at that moment directed to the one sole object of sparing his own feelings as much as possible. He, therefore, took no further notice of this than saying, “Yes, my love, as I told you last night, I must positively manage

so as to get you back again to Paris as soon as possible."

Sabina sighed, shook her head, but said nothing in reply.

" You really, my dear girl," resumed her father, actively employing himself in preparations for eating his breakfast,—" you really *must* get back to Paris. You have no idea of the pain it gives me to see you buried here. To say the truth, my dear love, this idea of your being speedily restored to Paris is all I have to console me under the first sorrow which I have to communicate to you." Sabina started, and looked at him in great alarm. " Yes, dearest," he resumed, " there is yet more sorrow in store for us. I have received notice, through the agency of our excellent friend Father Mark, that my presence is absolutely necessary at Rome or in Spain, and I must set off, Sabina, within an hour ! "

An exclamation of great agony burst from the poor girl at hearing this, and, though as unselfish as her hardened father was the re-

verse, she did for one short moment feel the terrible desolation of her own situation beyond all else; but, in the next, the idea of his being about to encounter fatigue and inconvenience chased every other, and she inquired, with anxious tenderness, as to his mode of travelling and the probable length of his absence.

"I shall travel by public conveyances, my love," he replied, "which is the mode best suited to my fallen fortunes. But as to the length of my stay, it is impossible to answer satisfactorily. You are aware, Sabina, how much I have already done for the cause in which I am embarked, and having done so much, your good sense must teach you to expect that I shall hold myself ready to do more. In one word, Sabina, there is nothing which could be required of me to which I am not prepared to submit. From what I can learn from Father Mark—but be very careful, my dear girl, not to let him know that I have told you this—but by what I hear from Father Mark, the great terror of my royal friend arises at present from the probability that I

may be pursued and taken. He has, therefore, dictated that I should immediately repair to Rome, and afterwards to a certain convent in Andalusia, and there wait for further instructions."

"Oh, my father!" exclaimed Sabina, "can you leave me thus?"

Hargrave shrunk from the gentle eyes that awaited his answer, and then, for one solitary moment, spoke in the accents of truth and nature. "Did you know, my child, how dearly my remaining here might cost me, you would suffer much before you would ask me to do it!"

"Oh! go then, go!" cried Sabina, with an instinctive perception of the truth of this. "Think not of me, I shall do well,—perfectly well; Adèle will come back to me."

"She will, Sabina, or else you will go to her. Meantime, good Father Mark and his excellent mother will watch over you; and if your return to Paris, or mine from Spain, be delayed, it may be that your best course will be to remove to the quiet shelter of their hum-

ble home. We must take no leave, Sabina, neither of us could bear it. Here is gold, my child, more than will be sufficient for your wants till you reach the protection of your aunt and sister. Adieu! adieu! fear not but we shall speedily meet again. Spare me, Sabina, spare me!" And with these words Mr. Hargrave laid her gently on a sofa, and departed. Had he ventured to look around, he would have seen that he might have safely gazed at her for a few moments longer without any danger that her words should wound him, for she was senseless.

CHAPTER X.

THE last injunction given by Mr. Hargrave to Father Mark was that his letter to Madame de Hautrivate, which he left in his hands, should not be consigned to the post till the tenth day after his departure. This order the careful priest registered on a slate, which hung conveniently in his mother's parlour, for the reception of numberless memoranda, concerning appointments for confessions, church-services, chanting practisings, and so forth ; most of which would probably have been forgotten without them. There was, however, one duty, of which he never made any memorandum, but which, nevertheless, he never forgot, namely, the being near to all who wanted his good offices. Though his short acquaintance with his new penitents made it quite impos-

sible for him to know or guess how terrible to Sabina was this separation from her father, his kind and gentle nature led him to pity her profoundly. Dearly as he himself loved to be alone, he could not well endure the thought of the sad solitude of one so young ; and daily did the good man convey to her an humble-worded but most urgent invitation from his old mother, entreating her to take up her quarters with them, till such time as the friends her papa had written to in Paris should get the letter and come to Gernsbach to fetch her. But Sabina, who pertinaciously clung to the last words she had heard her father speak, which were, "*Fear not but we shall meet again speedily,*" as constantly declined the offered kindness, uniformly replying by quoting these parting words, and adding strength to them by observing that it was impossible any one could tell how soon he might come back again. "I would not for the world, and all the glory of it, be absent from these walls," she said, "at the moment he shall re-enter them ! No, good father!—no, I cannot go with you. I feel that it is my duty to remain here, to await the fulfil-

ment of his promise ; and while I feel it I must act accordingly."

" There is no more to be said, my daughter," replied the kind-hearted priest, after this, or something to the same effect, had been repeated to him half-a-dozen times. " I will not persecute you with invitations ; but should you at any moment fancy that you could find comfort from being with my good mother, come to us, my child, without waiting for further invitation."

" God reward you, Father Mark, for all your kindness, both to my poor father and to me. It is a very great comfort to know that I have such friends near me."

And so it unquestionably was ; and though Sabina preferred gliding through the spacious solitary chambers like a ghost, with no human voice, save that of Gertrude, to break the profound stillness that surrounded her, she nevertheless did remember, from time to time, with a sensation like pleasure, that in case she felt her courage fail her, and the solemn, unbroken silence of her long days too terrible to bear, she might at any moment take the strong arm of Gertrude, and walk into Gerns-

bach with the assurance of finding safe protection and certain kindness.

The first event which broke the monotony of her life during this dreary interval was a letter brought to her by the Frau Weiber from Adèle. It was written with strict observance of the cautions agreed upon at her departure from the château, and therefore, of necessity, contained little more than an assurance of her safety,—that the lady she had gone to visit had received her kindly,—and that she had already seen the kind old lawyer, with whom they had all been acquainted in former times, who had willingly undertaken to help her in the business which she had to do.

This was not much ; but it sufficed to comfort and cheer poor Sabina ; and it was read, and re-read, on the rock and in the castle, till every word was known by heart, and all the deficiencies which caution had left supplied by imagination, till it seemed to tell her *almost* all the Paris news she wanted to know.

But day after day wore away, and she received no tidings of her father. She remembered that he had not said any thing about

writing to her, but she had never doubted that it was his intention to do so, and as no morning passed without her despatching Hans to inquire for letters at the post, at Frau Weiber's and at Father Mark's, so no evening came that did not bring disappointment.

At length the ten days appointed by Mr. Hargrave for the retention of his letter to Madame de Hautrivate were expired, and the punctual Father Mark dropped the despatch with his own hand into the letter-box. On the day following he received from his departed penitent a note containing these words :

“ FATHER MARK,—Nothing can save the secret on which so much depends but my immediately becoming a member of that strictest of religious communities where speech is forbidden, and I submit. Yet it may be that my name shall yet resound through the Vatican !

“ Tell my beloved daughter that I had no courage to inform her how this journey was likely to end ; but that now I send her my blessing with more assurance of its efficacy than I could ever dare to do before. Watch over her, till her sister or her aunt come to

reclaim her. Brother, farewell ! May the saints have you in their holy keeping prays one who, while in the world, was known as C. H., but who henceforward will be distinguished only as

“ ANSELMO.”

Father Mark was in no degree surprised by this epistle, nor would he have cared three farthings about it, had he not remembered that he must perform the painful task of communicating its unfeeling contents to the lonely inmate of *the Residence*. Father Mark’s reverence for the Church made him habitually abstain from all critical examinations of persons proclaiming themselves peculiarly pious ; but in the case of Mr. Hargrave, he felt, in spite of himself, that he was a hypocrite, selfish, and unfeeling, as well as being by far the most fatiguing penitent he had ever shrived ; so that it was with no very kindly feelings towards the hard-hearted, intriguing father that he set off to perform this terrible commission to his child. Before he reached the castle however, he made up his mind to attempt nothing like circum-

locution, or consolation either, but to put the letter itself into the hands of Sabina.

During the wretched hours which succeeded Adèle's first announcement of Mr. Hargrave's danger, and all the time marked by every species of privation and sadness, which had followed, no shadow of a thought had ever crossed the mind of Sabina, tending to cast a doubt either on the wisdom, goodness, or affection of her father. For one or two short moments, perhaps, this perfect reliance, love, and confidence, had received a *little shake*, when the political agent (as he declared himself to be) definitively declared to her his intention of sacrificing **EVERY THING** to the cause in which he had embarked. For a moment she thought that this could hardly be right, and that there was no cause for which she would sacrifice him. But the tenderness of parting sorrow had drowned all such speculations; and for days and days after he had left her, no feeling, no reflection of any kind arose to interfere with her perfect love for him. But then followed an interval of sharper anguish than even the first agony of parting had brought with it; for as she sat

upon the seat she had formed for herself upon the summit of the cliff, she fell into a fit of meditation that lasted till she was startled out of it by perceiving that twilight was fast settling into darkness.

Sabina knew it not, but the five hours she had thus passed formed a most important epoch in her life. It was not, indeed, the first time, by many, that she had sat alone on that same spot, yielding up her young heart and imagination to both sweet and bitter fancies. But hitherto very little of serious reflection had mixed with her reveries; and, to own the truth, the hero of the rock, in his double character of prince and peasant, had been the subject of by far the greater portion of the thoughts which had occupied her.

But, on the evening in question, the state of her mind was wholly different. She indulged no longer in the rainbow meditations which had often followed the tears she permitted to fall in memory of departed pleasure, and during which the pertinacious elasticity of her young spirit often indulged her with vague but bright glimpses of a possible future; no such silly fancies amused her now. She

felt her situation such as it really was, full of doubt and dread for the future, and of gloom and suffering for the present ; and then came, involuntarily and irresistibly, a throng of burning thoughts, all testifying, as with tongues of flame, against the conduct of her father. She remembered her lost mother, and the watchful care which, as long as recollection could go back, she knew had been bestowed upon her in little things as well as great, so as to shield her from every danger and from every pain that human power could avert. She remembered, too, the species of idolatry with which her father had been used to treat her, the accumulated luxury with which it had been his will and pleasure to surround her, rendering her as unfit for the changes and chances of this mortal life as it was possible to make her ; and then she thought of the manner in which she had been abandoned for the sake of a political intrigue.

Could Adèle have been made a party to these thoughts, could she have seen the deep expression of misery which they produced on the altered features of her sister, she would have felt how vain was the vanity of believing

that she could spare the child of such a man as Hargrave the agony of discovering him to be unworthy. Gentle indeed, most gentle, and most full of pitying love, was the sentence which the heart of Sabina passed against her father. But she did pass sentence against him, and the moment of doing so was, perhaps, the most painful of her life.

It was on returning from this more than melancholy musing, that she found Father Mark waiting for her, to communicate the important letter he had received from her father. He had already been at the château for above three hours, and would have given up the performance of his painful errand for that night, had he not began to feel seriously anxious for the safety of the solitary wanderer. Glad was he, and Hans and Gertrude also, as they decried her from the look-out which they all occupied together on the terrace ; but the gladness faded rapidly, when on entering a room where there were lights, the extreme paleness of her face became visible. Father Mark felt frightened, and could think of nothing but telling her to go to bed,—to go to bed instantly. But, unfortunately, he uncon-

sciously held in his hand, as he said this, an object upon which the eyes of Sabina had eagerly fixed themselves, and which caused her to give no other reply to his kind injunction than an exclamation which gave no sort of hope that she would comply with it. "That is a letter from my father! Oh! give it to me—give it to me!"

Perfectly unable to invent any excuse to avoid doing so, he complied, put the letter into her hands, and turned his head away from her as she read it.

The meditations of the rock had been but a bad preparation for the fearful stroke which now fell upon her. Had she been thinking only of her own misery, the effect might have been more favourable, as it might have taught her to feel that it was hardly possible her situation could be made worse by any steps her father could take; but to a mind just awakened to the power of perceiving that it was possible he could act unworthily, the lines she read brought both sorrow and indignation to her heart through no palliating medium of self-delusion. She had lost her father for ever,—lost him doubly. It was tremendous

to know that she should never behold him more ; but it was a deeper pang still to feel that had she lost him but a few short weeks before, the loss would have been heavier still.

The first visible effect of this appalling news was an air of stupor, that fixed her features into an aspect so unlike her own, that Gertrude and the priest, who stood one on each side of her, felt terrified from thinking that her reason had left her. But she heard them express this fear in words, and immediately rousing herself, she said, “ No, no ; there is no danger of it. I have been frightened,—perhaps a little stunned, by this news. But God will have pity upon me, and will not let me lose my reason. It is now that I shall have the greatest need of it. What is this about my sister and my aunt, Father Mark ? I do not well understand it. How did my father know that they were coming here ? ”

“ How did he know it ? that is a question, my child, that I cannot answer ; but the letter he confided to me, which, as I think, informed them that they would be wanted here, was posted by me yesterday ; your father having so ordered it.”

"That is all well," replied Sabina, composedly. "I shall be more fit to meet them."

Though relieved by this from his fears for her reason, the good priest was hardly satisfied to leave her; and once more urged her removal to his mother's house, as a dwelling less forlorn than the wide mansion she was in; and strengthened his arguments by saying that her father had recommended this removal. How amply sufficient would this argument have been a short time before, to make her comply with it! But now its effect was different. After a moment's silence, during which one or two strong heavings of the breast shewed that some powerful emotion was at work within, she said,—

"In my altered condition, Father Mark, it will not be wise for me to regulate my conduct by the judgment of any one who is not in a position to know what that condition is. I no longer expect to find the world a path of flowers, and I shall have to prepare myself for many things worse than inhabiting a house that is too large for me."

"Well, my dear child, I would have you do whatever your own heart tells you will be least

painful," replied Father Mark. "And now good night! you will let me see you to-morrow?"

This quiet yielding to her wayward longing to be alone did her better service than the most orthodox opposition to it; and poor Sabina shed some gentle, healing tears, as she thanked him for it. Nevertheless, though it soothed, it only confirmed her in her averseness to quit the spot where Adèle had left her; and when the morning came, and brought the good priest to her again, she repeated to him with so much earnestness that it was her wish to remain where she was till Adèle came for her, that once more he yielded, promising to see her from time to time, and making her promise in return that she would give him notice if she changed her mind. One favour only she asked of him before they parted, which was that he would let her have her father's letter.

To this request he could not make, nor did he see, any objection; and having complied with it, he left her with a fervent blessing, and a promise that she should be remembered in his prayers.

It may seem strange to say that the perusal

of this letter many times repeated was beneficial to Sabina, and tended to reconcile her to the loss she had sustained; but it certainly was the case. The phrase referring to the possibility that his name might "resound through the Vatican," opened to her a whole volume of meditation; and that ambition would still continue to be ambition under every change of circumstances, was a truth which became stamped upon her mind in characters indelible.

"Adèle saw all this," thought she, "before it was plain enough to catch my undiscerning eyes."

And then came home to her heart the dearest solace that her fate had left her,—the reunion with that dear Adèle, who now seemed a thousand times more precious and more beloved than before. Two days after the departure of her father, she received a second letter from her through the hands of the Frau Weiber; but written as it was with all the cautious ambiguity which had been so strictly enjoined, she learned nothing from it, save that all things seemed to promise well for the happy termination of "more affairs than one."

What this might mean, it was, of course, impossible to discover; but as Adèle referred all explanation to their meeting, Sabina most contentedly did so too, and thanked Heaven for the favourable oracle, despite its obscurity.

But yet this meeting came not; and a whole fortnight had elapsed since the departure of her father's letter. What could this mean? How was it possible that such a letter could remain unanswered? Yet still her confidence in Adèle wavered not. She felt sure, oh! very sure, that she would come for her; and though her heart sickened by the hope delayed, her sisterly love was of a quality that sufficed to cast out fear. She remembered their last embrace, and was satisfied.

CHAPTER XI.

A MORE able general than Alfred Coventry never stepped forward at a moment of need. From the moment that Adèle fairly consented to put herself and her friend Roger under his guidance, all things had gone well with her; and yet, like a spoiled child—as she was, she grumbled,—grumbled because she had to confess to Sabina the startling precipitancy of her marriage,—grumbled because she could frame no excuse for doing exactly what she most wished to do,—grumbled, in short, because she actually was obliged to marry the man she loved in less than a week after he had asked her to do so.

Coventry, however, was not absolutely hard-hearted towards her; and having learned from M. de Servac that his presence could not by

say possibility be wanted in Paris till the day of trial, he determined to spare both himself and his bride as much of the publicity which the delighted Madame de Hautrivate was likely to bring upon them, as possible, by driving from the hôtel of the English Ambassador, where the marriage ceremony was performed, to Montmorenci ; and the better to enjoy the interval of *honeysed* peace, he contrived to be uncertain as to which way they intended to drive, till after they had parted from their full-dressed aunt, who, though the weather was exceedingly warm, failed not to envelope herself in the adhesive folds of her beautiful cashmere.

Before leaving Paris, before having lost her right to the name of De Cordillac, Adèle wrote once again to Sabina ; but, at the earnest request of her *almost* husband, she did not even allude to the momentous adventure which was about to befall her. “ Let us,” he said, “ appear so suddenly before her at her Mummelsee, with our liberated man, Roger, behind us, that she may believe, indeed, that the ‘ good people’ have been busy in your affairs, and brought all these wonderful adventures to pass.”

This was agreed to, on the part of Adèle, the more readily, because she felt that it would be very difficult, in the mysterious style of correspondence to which she was condemned, to render that clear which was really in itself extremely in need of elaborate explanation to make intelligible.

In fact, notwithstanding her grateful sense of exceeding happiness, Adèle still felt the necessity of such hurried espousals as an adventure, embarrassing to recount; and she remembered, too, having once fallen into a paroxysm of indignation, because a young acquaintance had “transgressed the laws of civilised society” in the same manner; for the which Sabina had taken the liberty of laughing at her; so that, on the whole, she greatly preferred appearing as a bride before her sister, when the joy of meeting would overpower every other feeling, to sitting down and informing her by letter, that she had fortunately met Mr. A——d C——y the day before yesterday, and was going to marry him the day after to-morrow.

MR. AND MRS. COVENTRY, therefore, were sentimentalising very agreeably amidst the

shades so pleasantly redolent of the Swiss philosopher, when Mr. Hargrave's letter to Madame de Hautrivate arrived in Paris. That excellent lady, on perusing it, really felt very much as if the foundations of the solid world on which she stood were crumbling and giving way beneath her feet. Oh! it was a great blessing for Adèle that she was beyond hearing the myriads of interjectional bursts, equally expressive of admiration and astonishment, by which Madame de Hautrivate relieved her spirits! But if she escaped it, very few of her acquaintance did. What was Madame Bertrand's diamond adventure compared to what she had to tell? Mademoiselle de Cordillac, her eldest niece, married to one of the finest private fortunes in England! That "*âme noble*," her "*élégant et aimable beau-frère*," turned monk! And her youngest niece, Mademoiselle Hargrave, accounted only a few weeks ago to be one of the largest fortunes, as well as one of the greatest beauties, in Paris, left, forsaken, "*absolument abandonnée*," within the precincts of a miserable little German town called Gernsbach; which, she believed, was buried in the depths of the Black Forest, or else

in the farthest part of Bohemia, she could not exactly recollect which, but that made no difference. Here was “*un rontan,—mais un roman inouï et sans pareil.*” .

To her very particular friends she read the whole letter; for, as the *âme noble* was now in safe harbour, she had the immense gratification of knowing every thing and telling every thing without let or hindrance of any kind; and truly she made the *salons* of Paris ring with the tidings of Mr. Hargrave’s magnanimous adherence to “the cause,” and of the excellent chance there seemed to be of his descendants having hereafter the gratification of seeing his name enrolled in the sacred calendar among those of the saints made perfect here on earth.

Among the multitude of persons who eagerly listened to this wonderful history, Prince Frederic of ***** was not the least interested. Having heard something of the matter at second hand, he honoured Madame de Hauttrivage with a call at her residence in the Rue de Rivoli; and by means of shewing about one-twentieth part of the interest he felt in the business, induced her to enter at the fullest possible length into the whole history of the

âme noble's devotion to *la cause*—the incredible sacrifices he had made—the ruin which had been its result—his magnanimous resolution to bury himself and his secret under the cowl of a monk,—and, lastly, the unheard-of state of matchless and romantic desolation in which he had been forced to leave *sa charmante fille* in the very centre of the Black Forest.

“Where, madame?” said the Prince, with a sternness which she thought looked more like the *hauteur* of royalty than any thing she had ever seen in him.

“*Mais à Gernsbach, mon Prince, au milieu de la Forêt Noir, à ce que je crois.*”

“*A Gernsbach?*” returned his Royal Highness, in a voice that trembled in spite of all his princely resolution; “*à Gernsbach,—près de Baden?*”

“*Mais oui, Altesse, mais certainement oui,—près de Baden.*”

The Prince rose to take his leave; but, ere he reached the door, turned again towards the loquacious lady, and said, “May I take the liberty, madame, of asking if it be not your intention to go to Gernsbach immediately?”

“*Moi! oh, mon Dieu, non! Pour moi, mon*

Prince, ce serait impossible!" And then she went on to inform him that she had no doubt but that her eldest niece, Madame Alfred Coventry, would repair thither with all the haste possible, as soon as her *mari* should be able to leave Paris.

"*Bon jour, madame!*" said the Prince.

"*Bon jour, votre altesse!*" said Madame de Hautrivaige.

* * * * *

To say that the tone of Sabina's spirits did not become more and more sad, as the days crept on without bringing any further tidings of her sister, would not be strictly true; yet she bore it well. Her mind had received a blow which seemed less to stun than to steady it. Never had she thought so deeply,—never had she weighed so justly, the value of real against ideal advantages, and never did she feel so capable of submitting meekly to the touch of sorrow as since she had been deprived of every support, of every friend, of every counsellor, save "*herself alone.*"

Father Mark, probably from his own love of being left in peace, had contented himself with her promise of sending to him when she

wished for his counsel or assistance in any way, and had ceased to importune her either with visits or invitations; so that her wide sitting-room in the château was as lonely as the forest, and the forest not a whit more melancholy than her sitting-room; and the hours of her long day were pretty equally divided between both.

On the afternoon of the fifth day after Mr. Hargrave's letter had been despatched to Paris, Sabina, with slow and languid steps, once more climbed the steep and narrow path which led to the often-mentioned rock above the castle. Her heart was heavy, for Hans had just returned from Gernsbach with the oft-told tale of "no letters," and her eyes were full of tears despite her newly cherished philosophy. But the evening was enchanting; not a sight, not a sound, not a smell, that could make Nature,—unmixed, unadulterated Nature,—enchanting, was wanting, and Sabina suffered herself to be cheered; and when she reached the little platform where she so dearly loved to sit, she felt a throb of pleasure at looking down upon the lovely landscape that for a moment made her forget her desolation.

But not even the beauty of such a scene as that which spreads below the commanding point on which she was seated, could long avail to make her forget what, and where, she was, and what she had been. Yet still the tone of her sorrow followed that of her gentle nature, softened as it was by that species of womanly philosophy which shews itself in the endurance rather than in the battling with grief.

She had thrown the large flat straw hat, worn by the peasants of the district, on the ground beside her; and a soft warm breeze, that fluttered through the boughs which sheltered her, blew aside the curls from her forehead, refreshing without chilling her. Never, perhaps, in all the soft grace of the most becoming ball-room toilet had she looked so beautiful as she did then; her uncovered head bent slightly forward, and her deep blue eyes steadfastly fixed on the dark waters of the little lake below, might have been watching for the fabled sovereigns of its waves, or looking upon many other things which were not, save in the memory of the fair statue who thus sat, seemingly fixed in contemplation.

While thus employed, if it may be so called, in idle thoughtfulness, Sabina fancied that she heard a rustling amidst the leaves behind her. She turned suddenly round, but saw nothing ; all was again still ; and believing that it was only a capricious freshening of the evening breeze, she turned again to look upon the lake, and think, and think anew.

But this profound tranquillity of spirit did not last long : another sound was heard ; but ere she had time to think whence it might come or what it might be, she saw standing before her the identical hunter youth whom she had seen nearly a year before exactly on the same spot. His dress was the same, his stature was the same ; the same bright curls which had attracted Adèle's notice waved over his forehead. Yes, it was the same, and yet how different ! The laughing light of the bright blue eye was gone. The gay and thoughtless smile which had curled his handsome lip had given place to an anxious, agitated expression, that shewed his very soul was moved by the thoughts with which he was occupied.

Sabina looked at him long and earnestly,

but seemed incapable of uttering a word ; and he too looked, and looked in silence, but by degrees the troubled aspect of his countenance softened. It seemed as if, during the short space in which each seemed perusing the eyes of the other, a world of doubt and uncertainty had passed from him to her. Instead of anxiety and agitation, his features now expressed nothing but gentleness and love ; while hers, on the contrary, grew troubled as his grew calm, and at length the words burst from her, “Are you Prince Frederic ?”

“ Sabina ! tell me, ere I answer you, why is it that I find you here ? Here on this very, very spot — this narrow spot — not easy to find, not easy to remember. Tell me, Sabina, why do I find you here ?”

Poor girl ! the feelings which she had never fully and honestly avowed to her own heart were now traced, discovered, and proclaimed, by precisely that being in the whole wide world from whom she would most have wished to conceal them.

“ Oh, terrible !” she exclaimed, hiding her face in her hands, while her heaving bosom testified her suffering.

Her companion knelt before her, and gently drawing her hands away, said, “ Before you condemn me, Sabina, remember my position. It is that, loveliest and best Sabina, that is terrible! Nay, look at me again! Oh! you know not what I have suffered from trying *not* to see those lovely eyes. Yes, Sabina, I am Prince Frederic. He who fluttered round you in the drawing-rooms of Paris; sometimes with an aching heart, but always with a steadfast spirit,—steadfast in the resolution of not running the tremendous risk of being loved because I was PRINCE Frederic. But now, Sabina, quarrel not with the dear precious gleam of light which, like a star in the midst of darkness, has led me to your feet. Your aunt told me you had taken shelter at Gernsbach. Why at Gernsbach? Why at Gernsbach, Sabina? Why do I find you on this very spot? If I am wrong,” he added, rising from the ground,—“ if I have falsely imagined the thoughts of my own soul were reflected in yours, speak but one word, Sabina!—say only ‘Leave me, Prince Frederic,’ and you shall see me start from your presence with a step, if

possible, more rapid than that which brought me here."

Either Sabina had lost her hearing or her power of speech, or else she did not wish Prince Frederic to leave her, for, most assuredly, instead of repeating the sentence he had suggested, she sat looking more like a beautiful statue than ever, and without uttering a single word.

"My wife, and my Princess!" exclaimed the young man, once more falling at her feet, and explaining, with very tolerable clearness, all he had felt and suffered, from the hour in which he had first seen her on the spot where they now met again. Nor did Sabina, though she listened to him apparently with very great attention, again exclaim, "Oh, terrible!"

Of course Sabina was exceedingly shocked at being escorted to the door of her wild-looking home by a young man, especially as his dress differed very little from that of a peasant, and as, by some accident or other, they quite forgot the hour of the evening, and did not reach the gates till the light had very perceptibly begun to fade. Gertrude,

however, who saw them approach, behaved very civilly, for she said not a word about it to Sabina, though she did remark to Hans that she certainly never did see a young fellow make so fine a bow as this stranger did when he took leave of their poor young lady at the door.

* * * *

Shortly, *very* shortly after daybreak on the following morning, Sabina astonished Father Mark and Father Mark's mother, exceedingly, by entering their little parlour, and telling them that as they had been so very kind as to invite her, she was come to stay with them for a few days.

Notwithstanding their surprise, however, both the good priest and his old mother received her with great kindness, the best proof of which was, that they neither of them said a word about her having changed her mind. It is probable, however, that Father Mark guessed what might be the reasons, and that he did not think the worse of her for it when the young hunter made his appearance a few hours afterwards, and gave the priest to understand that he was affianced to the young lady who

was his inmate. On the strength of this assurance, which was gently assented to by the blushing Sabina, the lovers were permitted to have a tolerably long *tête-à-tête* conference, and many important matters were discussed and arranged in the course of it.

There is a lesson which Fate is often found to bestow on mortals, which if read aright might cure them of much presumption. How many among us may remember to have heard the young, and strong in purpose, declare that there were things which they were positively determined never to do, and other things which they were as positively determined that they would do, and how few among us have seen these purposes accomplished !

“ *L'Homme propose, et Dieu dispose,*”

is a pretty proverb.

It might have been difficult to find any two ladies in any country less inclined to join in the chorus,—

“ Happy is the wooing
That is not long a doing,”

than were Adèle Cordillac and Sabina Har-

grave ; and yet it would, perhaps, be rarer still to find any who had acted with, apparently, such decided approbation of it. Whether my sister-heroines ought to have been sturdy in their refusal to listen to any arguments which might lead to such a termination, their fellow-heroines must decide ; but most assuredly both Alfred Coventry and Prince Frederic had very cogent reasons to urge in favour of the unseemly haste they proposed. Those of Alfred have been already explained ; and Prince Frederic was not a whit behind him in proving an absolute necessity for the same measure. Sabina had in fact no alternative to propose that could be considered as eligible. Having startled her almost into the belief that he was jesting, by informing her of the marriage of her sister, he proceeded to state that her speedy arrival at Gernsbach was hardly to be hoped for ; for that the bride and bridegroom being absent from Paris at the time Mr. Hargrave's letter arrived, and having declared themselves at their departure uncertain in what direction they should go, Madame de Hautravage was left with as little power as inclination to disturb the serenity of their happiness by communicating its contents.

What then was to become of Sabina ? Prince Frederic confessed that he had travelled to Baden with too much speed to be cautious, and that he had little hope his incognito could be preserved, if indeed his attempt to effect it had not already proved abortive. Should he then leave her after a visit which, if he were known, was certain of being widely and loudly commented upon, what would be the inference ?

Delicately, most delicately, he made her see and feel, that the only permanent and insuperable obstacle to his hope of giving her the place in society which his wife ought to hold, would be created by such gossip as this imprudence would inevitably produce. At the present moment Father Mark knew nothing but that he was her lover ; and if she declared it to be her purpose to become his wife, the good man, who well knew her situation, must feel that he could not better perform the duty of a temporal as well as spiritual father than by joining their hands immediately.

That her sister, whom she had ever loved to make her model in all things, had felt that circumstances could justify a hurried marriage, was very clear ; and this, together with the

dread of throwing herself upon her and her husband, under appearances so painful as those suggested, sufficed to convince her that all he said, and all that he proposed, was

“ Wisest, discreetest, best.”

* * * * *

Nothing could exceed the thankfulness of Father Mark when this immediate marriage was proposed to him ; for his concern for Sabina was only to be equalled by his conscious inability to assist her. His mother had hinted, before the arrival of Prince Frederic, that as it was evident her Paris friends were in no great hurry to reclaim her, the best and safest course for her to pursue would be to follow her father's example, and embrace a religious life ;—a piece of advice to which all his deference for ecclesiastic, as well as maternal authority, could not reconcile the kind-hearted priest. Joyfully, therefore, and without the slightest suspicion or scruple, he joined their hands as firmly as their hearts had been joined before.

The incognito which, as Prince Frederic truly stated, had been neglected before, was

now assumed with such effectual care, that whatever might have been at one moment reported at Baden respecting the movements of Prince Frederic died away for want of confirmation ; while he quietly prepared to convey his lovely bride to England, where a meeting with her sister could be more pleasantly and conveniently arranged than any where else.

Sabina was quite as anxious as her noble husband could be that her marriage should not be immediately published, especially at Paris. The adventures of their family must already, she thought, have made too much noise there to render it at all desirable that it should be increased. She was too, perhaps, a little *piquée* by Adèle's silence towards her ; and, in short, she agreed to address such a letter to her, under cover to Madame de Hautrivate, as might prevent her being *too* much alarmed, and yet leave enough of obscurity to ensure the concealment which they at present wished to preserve.

It was thus she wrote :—

“ MY DEAREST ADÈLE,—You must have ere this learned the decisive step which my poor

father has thought it necessary to take, in order to shelter the secret which he holds to be more sacred than any other earthly tie. This is a subject upon which I can enter into no discussion ; nor is it necessary. You will be able to guess but too well what it has cost me.

" Reasons, which I will explain when we meet, have rendered it impossible for me to remain with propriety at the Castle of the Lake ; and other circumstances, the explanation of which I must also refer to our meeting, have led me to take refuge in England rather than in Paris ; where the strange termination of my poor father's career would render me the object of more curiosity than I should like to encounter.

" This sounds strangely, Adèle, does it not ? Coolly to tell you thus, that I am about to leave Germany for England ; and as coolly to tell you that I expect you will meet me there. But so you will, dear sister ; nor do I think that you will particularly dislike my choice of England as a place of meeting. Inquire at Mivart's Hotel for a letter addressed to A. C. as soon as you conveniently can, after reaching

London, and you shall know thereby where to find me.

“ Our good aunt does not appear to make herself very particularly anxious about me, but I will beg you to tell her that I am perfectly well, and will do myself the pleasure of writing to her as soon as I feel sufficiently settled to be able to send any satisfactory intelligence. And now farewell, my dearest sister: doubt not that I love you dearly, and let me not wait for you in England longer than is absolutely necessary.

“ Ever affectionately yours,

“ SABINA.

“ P.S. Be not anxious about my mode of travelling—I shall go under respectable protection.”

It is impossible to imagine astonishment much greater than was felt by Mrs. Coventry on receiving this letter. It reached her hands only a few hours later than that of Mr. Hargrave to Madame de Hautrivage, and while she was suffering the most pungent anxiety on account of her forsaken sister whom she figured to herself as sinking beneath an agony

of grief at the loss of her beloved, but unprincipled and most selfish father, and trembling with all the timid sensitiveness of her character at her own desolate position.

Was it possible that Sabina could thus decide upon setting off upon a long journey, to a country where she was utterly unknown, where there existed no friend, no protector, to welcome her? Again and again she told herself that it was impossible; and then re-read the letter and was compelled to believe that so it was.

Coventry could give her no help in explaining this most mysterious and tormenting document; for though he saw, or fancied he saw, that in the mention of Adèle's approving England there was reason to suppose that by some means or other she had become acquainted with their marriage, the seeming impossibility of this robbed the suggestion of all its value, and left them both exactly as much puzzled as they were before.

There were moments when Adèle thought it possible that, despite all the efforts she had used to prevent it, Sabina had perceived the total change of her feelings towards Mr. Har-

grave, and felt her sisterly affection chilled by it ; but the remembrance of the fond embrace on the last evening they had passed together, which seemed to have been given and received as a pledge that they were still dear to each other as ever, drove this painful idea away. But it only left her to torment herself anew in efforts to explain what was inexplicable.

The only relief to be found for this state of feverish uncertainty was furnished by making themselves ready to leave Paris within the shortest time possible after the trial of Roger Humphries should be over, determined that if Sabina could be found by means of an application at Mivart's, she should not be long lost to them.

Nothing could be better than M. de Servac's management of the worthy Roger's affair. His *alibi* and his innocence were proved to the satisfaction of all the world ; and if a most triumphant acquittal could atone for his imprisonment, it was atoned for. But a good deal of police blundering followed ; for no sooner did it become clearly evident that Roger Humphries was innocent, than the logical inference that somebody else must be guilty

threw the minds of all men, and of all policemen in particular, into a state of the most violent activity. Nor was the Bertrand robbery the only mystery of which M. Collet had hoped for an explanation during this trial, and in which hope he had been disappointed. He fully expected that Roger Humphries would be convicted, and was prepared to follow this up with what he considered as a very pretty chain of evidence to prove that if not the actual thief, he must have been connected with those who were in the affair which had taken place near Riccardo's. Not only, however, was his innocence of the first charge satisfactorily proved, but the large sum of gold found in his possession was shewn, by Mr. Coventry's statements concerning his length of service, the amount of his wages, and his quiet mode of life, to be no more than he would be likely to have amassed; while the testimony of Madame de Hautrivate, who had known him since the period of her sister's marriage, placed his character quite beyond the reach of any further suspicion.

In spite of all Madame Bertrand's assurances, therefore, that it was absolutely im-

possible Mr. Hargrave could have had any share in robbing her, it is more than probable that M. Collet's suspicions would again have settled upon that gentleman, had not the evasion of Signor Ruperto, together with the infamous character he had left behind him, pointed him out as more likely still. The circumstance, too, of only a few pieces among many of the gold found being marked, so lightened the suspicion against him on that score, that, together with the extreme improbability that a gentleman filling such a place in society should have committed the act, it turned all evil thoughts away from him, and directed all the energy of the baffled law towards tracing the course of the supposed culprit. Signor Ruperto, however, was at that time making arrangements for opening a large confectioner's shop at St. Petersburg in the most respectable style, and was in no more danger of being troubled by M. Collet than M. Collet was in danger of being troubled by him.

Roger Humphries' affair, then, being thus happily settled, and the old man consenting to attend the grateful Adèle to England, in the

delightful persuasion that her marriage would never have taken place if he had not taken such particular care of her letter, they set off in a style which contented even the *exigéante* Madame de Hautrivate, and as strong a desire to annihilate both time and space as ever propelled a fashionable pair.

Hardly had the foot of Mrs. Coventry touched the pavement before Mivart's Hotel before she forestalled the voice of her husband in asking for a letter addressed to A. C.; but it was some time before a document, which had reached the house by the undignified channel of the post, and with so very unpromising an address, could be found; even though inquired for by the elegant traveller who had stepped from a finished equipage with all fitting appurtenances of attendants and so forth to prove her claim to attention.

While the search for the A. C. despatch was going on, the impatient Adèle declared that she could not mount the stairs, as the doing so would evidently place her farther from the intelligence she felt sick with impatience to obtain. Coventry, who pitied the unfeigned agony of suspense which had seemed to in-

crease in its intensity as it approached its end, said not a word against this waiting scheme, and only placed himself before her in a corner which she occupied, so as to shelter her from the bustle of the goers and comers who filled the hall.

As he stood thus his eye was attracted to a very elegant equipage which displaced his own travelling carriage by driving up to the door. The floating feathers of the *chasseur* who sat behind it shewed that it belonged to a foreigner of distinction ; and, making a step forward to get a sight of the armorial bearings, he recognised the escutcheon of Prince Frederic of *****. The discovery was immediately announced to Adèle, and her first feeling at hearing it was a wish to escape seeing the Prince, while his name so vividly recalled the remembrance of the poor wandering Sabina in her brightest and gayest days, that tears started to her eyes at the idea of having to tell her umwhile admirer in answer to any inquiries with which he might honour her, that she knew not either how or where she was.

“ Perhaps we had better go to a room upstairs to wait,” said Adèle to her hus-

band ; " they are so very long in finding this letter."

" Shew us into a sitting-room," said Mr. Coventry to one of the servants of the house, who at that moment passed by.

" In a moment, sir," was the man's reply, as he stepped towards one in authority, who would settle the delicate question between the claims of handsome carriage, stylish servants, and so forth, against the no claims of people arriving without having bespoken rooms.

During this interval a movement was perceptible among the attendants who filled the hall. They stood back leaving space for a personage of handsome person and of lofty bearing, who was descending the stairs, while " the Prince," " the Prince," was whispered among them.

Adèle stood so near the door that it was impossible she could escape being seen ; and Coventry, unconscious of her wish to do so, changed his position and placed himself beside her.

It was, indeed, Prince Frederic of ***** who was thus passing to his carriage ; but as

he walked forward with his eyes directed towards the door, as those do walk who have no inclination to return all the staring they receive, Mrs. Coventry began to hope that they should escape his observation. But she was mistaken. Wishing to give some order to the servant who followed him, the Prince stopped and turned his head within three feet of the spot where she stood.

His recognition of her was instantaneous, and the bright smile that followed shewed that, to him at least, this recognition was full of pleasure.

The terms they had been on in Paris made it perfectly natural that he should come towards her with an extended hand; and as he immediately addressed her as “Madame Coventry,” the cordial manner in which he greeted her companion was in like manner intelligible; but both the husband and wife certainly felt rather surprised when, instead of passing on, he continued still firmly to clasp both their hands, and exclaimed,—“This meeting is, indeed, delightful! Let me lead you to the Princess!”

Adèle had too much the *usage du monde* not

to know that such an invitation approached very nearly to a command ; but her anxiety about Sabina, which nothing could for a moment set aside, superseded every thing else ; and in defiance of *etiquette* she said, “ Your Royal Highness does us great honour, but at this moment I fear it will be impossible for us to profit by it, as we are in search of a dear friend of whose abode we are as yet ignorant.”

“ Nay, but I cannot be refused ! ” said the young man, gaily seizing the arm of his unconscious sister-in-law ; “ the Princess will not detain you a moment longer than it may be convenient for you to stay ; but I cannot deny myself the pleasure of introducing you ! ”

Rank has its privileges. Had simple Frederic *un tel* ventured thus, *nolens volens*, to march off with his bride, it is probable that Mr. Coventry might not have followed so quietly ; but, as it was, he took his hat from his head and stepped on in the wake of his lady and the Prince without betraying any symptoms of dissatisfaction.

Ere he reached the first landing-place, however, his own man made a long stride or two

after him, for the purpose of inquiring what was to be done with the carriage, and whether the luggage was to be taken off. The moment which it took to say in reply that it must wait sufficed to take the Prince and Adèle out of sight; they had passed through a door near the top of the flight, but it was left open, and Mr. Coventry without ceremony passed through it also.

Great was his astonishment as he entered the apartment to perceive his wife fast locked in the arms of a lady at the upper end of the room. For a moment he stood still and stared at them, but in the next the mystery was explained, the two lovely faces ceased to conceal each other, and he beheld Sabina! Whether this explanation lessened or increased his astonishment may be doubted. Prince Frederic, however, left him not much leisure to meditate upon this unexpected discovery; but, approaching him with a look of "measureless content," he said, as he once more extended his hand, "Let us mutually congratulate each other, dear Coventry: we have both managed our love affairs with exemplary discretion; but as our respective romances

have ended in sober matrimony, we may now venture to speak openly concerning all our marvellous adventures. Look at our two dear wives! How very like the double cherry of which your poet tells! Think you not that it would be charity to leave them *tête-à-tête* till dinner-time? In the meantime you shall come with me into the next room while we inquire about your accommodation near us. And this point settled, you shall be indulged with half an hour for your toilet, and then I will put myself under your guidance, either to walk or drive, as you like best, for the rest of the morning."

Coventry, who had recovered his astonishment sufficiently to pay his compliments with a very good grace to his new sister, gallantly kissing her hand, when he had done so (a salutation which might, perhaps, have been exchanged for a brotherly kiss had the lady been less than royal), accepted the Prince's offered arm, and they walked off together.

There is no need to listen to all that Adèle told Sabina, or that Sabina told Adèle, during the happy hours which followed; for we pretty well know it already. And it would have

been well for us if we had enjoyed it all as much as they did.

* * * *

But little else of importance remains to be told. The morality of poetical justice was not infringed in the destiny of Mr. Hargrave. At any rate he thought himself considerably more than enough punished for all his sins, by learning the news of his daughter's marriage immediately after he had put it out of his power to profit by it; for, getting alarmed by a paragraph in the Paris papers about the renewed search making by the "unrivalled police" for the perpetrator of the Bertrand robbery, he gave a considerable portion of the jewels which remained from it for permission to dispense with the ceremony of novitiate and to take the vows as a brother of one of the strictest religious societies in Spain; in which country he thought he should be less likely to be traced than at Rome, where his respected uncle, the Cardinal, might have been apt to prate of his whereabouts under a more questionable name than that of "Anselmo."

The whole thing, however, turned out to be more disagreeable and vexatious than he had

power to bear ; for, instead of keeping his promise to Madame de Hautrivate and getting himself canonised, he was more than once threatened with the censures of the Church for various breaches of monastic discipline, so abominably ill-managed that they became subjects of scandal, which was of course more than his superior could overlook, especially after the last diamond had been lodged in his reverend hands as the price of absolution. So Mr. Hargrave fell ill and died ; a circumstance made known to the Princess Frederic of ***** with much ceremony, and over which she shed more tears than the object of them deserved.

The exalted position of many of her Royal Highness's maternal connexions greatly assisted the work of reconciliation between the Prince and his brother ; and, this once effected, the beauty, grace, and goodness of his lovely wife soon gave her the position in his family which he wished her to hold.

The intercourse between the sisters was frequent and delightful in every way ; Mr. Coventry's speedy succession to the English peerage, as well as the noble lineage of his

charming wife, rendering the connexion welcome in every way.

The affair of the robbery near Riccardo's remains a mystery to this day ; though Count Romanhoff has hardly yet ceased his efforts to discover the culprit. But though he continues to maintain a frequent intercourse with his friend Coventry, and perpetually discusses this interesting subject in the presence of his wife, she has never favoured him with any hints upon the subject ; her superior information, or, at any rate, her superior right of *guessing* upon it, being the only subject on which she has a secret either from her husband or her sister. But there is every reason to believe that all she knows, more than other people, concerning Mr. Hargrave, will die with her.

Madame de Hautravage is not forgotten by either of her nieces, and is quite as happy as such sort of old ladies can be ; but, at present, it but rarely happens that any one makes positive love to her, and nothing could enable her to bear this, but the number of new dresses received from her sister's dutiful children.

Roger would have been sadly perplexed as to how to decide the choice offered him between the houses of the two sisters, had not that of Adèle been in England, but this settled the point; and as the Prince and Princess make occasional visits to that country, the honoured and happy old man has already held the offspring of both sisters upon his knee.

Hans and Gertrude hold excellent situations in the household of Prince Frederic; and Susanne is again the *femme de chambre* of Adèle.

Madame Bertrand has been presented by her husband with a new set of jewels. And Father Mark is growing easier in his mind, and has never again been tortured by so illustrious a penitent as Mr. Hargrave.

THE END.

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